











**A COMPANION TO  
SHAKESPEARE STUDIES**



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Edited by  
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AND  
G. B. HARRISON

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## PREFACE

THE purpose of this book was first formulated in discussions between the editors in their capacities of President and Secretary of the<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare Association. They were in search of a programme. The question was: what avenues of Shakespeare scholarship now most needed exploring? That led to a consideration of recent work, its sufficiency or its prospects, and that to the assembling of the present material.

During the last thirty years or so there has been not only an increase and extension of Shakespearian study, but a notable 'transvaluation of its values'. The extension is reflected in the fourteen-fold division of this book. Not that the student of 1900, or even 1800, would find the subjects new to him, but the apparent estimate of the importance of some of them might well surprise him a little. Here, he might even say, is no study of Shakespeare at all, but a hundred thousand words or more, as much sometimes about our ignorance as our knowledge of the man, about the wretched theatre he had to work for, the clumsy habits of his printers, about his contemporaries and the circumstances, near and remote, in which the work was done; of the transcendental genius itself, no more than an echo or recounting of what has already been said. It is so. But just in this lies the present transvaluing of critical values; the latest, though it may not be the last, as Mr Eliot warns us.

The student's approach to Shakespeare, as the work of the last thirty years has planned it, will be something like a *contemporary* approach. He will try to make himself one with the audience at the Globe or Blackfriars. Certainly, this is only a first step; and beyond it a wide prospect opens out. If the plays have survived their age and the circumstances of their production it will be because of certain innate qualities in them; he will want to know why and how they have survived. If they have entered into an existence apart from the theatre altogether, he must look into that process too. Not, in fact, till he appreciates

the history and extent of the phenomenon of Shakespeare can he hope quite fruitfully to approach the thing itself. Then he may do so guideless or guided; and if he still prefer the acted play before him or the critic at his side, he can at least have learned to estimate the quality of his guide. The editors, incidentally, have made no attempt to reconcile the opinions of their collaborators (if these seem to differ it is better for the reader to observe it); and, as it happens, there has hardly been a dispute about facts. The utmost agreement desired was upon this way of approach.

It may be noticed—and objected—that the extension of Shakespearian study has been even wider than here appears, either by record or contribution. The omissions are deliberate. There is no discussion of the personal problem of the sonnets, and Dr Mackail's chapter on the Life is confined to the bare facts. We are concerned with the poet-dramatist, apparent in the work he left us; nothing more.

It remains for us to thank our collaborators, not only for their work but for the patience and goodwill with which they have responded to the occasional need there was for us to do what they naturally could not themselves do—clear away certain redundancies and weld the book into something like a whole. It was this foreseen need, let us add, which prevented our seeking collaboration farther afield; and that we could not avail ourselves of American scholarship has been a matter of particular regret. But the wider the divergencies of the study, the greater the importance of reconciling them to what unity is possible, of producing, in short, a *book*, not a mere assemblage of discourses.

For, finally, we hope that the book may make a wider appeal than to the specialist student. It should be able to bring the keener among the spectators or readers of the plays, whose only care is enjoyment, to a more familiar and a far livelier contact with them.

H G -B.

G. B. H.

# THE THEATRES AND COMPANIES

BY

C. J. SISSON

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## THE CONDITIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S ART

DR JOHNSON never mentioned Garrick in his *Preface* to Shakespeare, and thought that 'many of his plays are the worse for being acted'. Such a view has its dangers. Every artist has to work in his chosen medium. And drama, the most complex of all arts, proceeds by a triple process to its completion. It involves creation by the dramatist, re-creation by a company of actors on the boards of a stage, and a third incarnation in the illusion of the spectators. All three are essential, inseparable, indispensable. The closet-drama is an ignoble retreat from the proper conditions of the art. The hurly-burly of actor, stage and audience is the proper element of true drama.

It is right to think of Shakespeare, therefore, in terms of the stage as well as of literary categories. He worked in his medium, and there is evidence enough that he was content to do so. A good workman does not quarrel with his tools. And Shakespeare was no less craftsman than artist—words that the Elizabethan joined together and that modern confusions have divorced. His drama was rooted in his own age and in the conditions of his art, in the stage and its habits, in the audience and its tastes, as well as in the drama of earlier generations in England. What he learned of others, what was imposed upon him by the conditions of his occupation, as well as what he gave of his own, has come down to us blended together in his plays. And by his genius and prestige he has dwarfed his contemporaries, ob-

scured his background, and polarised all thought about the drama.

It is therefore of the utmost importance to seek to know under what conditions Shakespeare worked, subdued to his medium, yet not enslaved by it. We shall understand his genius the better when we know more about these actors, their theatres, and their audiences, and consequently about the opportunity, the stimulus, the freedom of his task, as also its limitations and bondages. To neglect such considerations is in effect to turn Shakespeare into closet-drama and to deprive him of much of his great glory.

### THE ACTORS' COMPANIES AND THE THEATRES

Shakespeare was an actor himself, and both he and the company of which he was a member shared the accumulated traditions and experience of some three hundred years of continuous acting. For the drama was already an ancient art in England. The corporate resources of the great provincial towns had developed in the Middle Ages not only elaborate productions of miracle plays, not only literary drama for such productions, but also trained groups of competent citizen actors. And they had fostered the natural taste for dramatic entertainments. So also the folk play, in its many forms, of unknown but great antiquity, bred both actors and audiences throughout the country. The nucleus for the professional practice of the art of acting was found in the houses of the nobility, who maintained small groups of entertainers, the descendants of the epic singers and jesters of earlier days. Such organisations may be seen to-day in native states in India, the actors being also skilled fencers, swordsmen, wrestlers, dancers, musicians and singers, experts in the various arts of entertainment. Such were also the members of these early English companies of actors, and the Elizabethan stage inherited their traditions of miscellaneous expertness, as well as the tradition of service to a patron.

The play of *Sir Thomas More* gives a picture of such a group of actors, Cardinal Wolsey's Men, called in to perform in *More's*

house in London about 1529. This illustrates the transition from the purely domestic group of actors to the travelling group, available for hire when invited. With the Tudor settlement of England life became freer, fuller, and more mobile. The nobles allowed their actors to go round exercising their trade. They ceased to be mere retainers, and maintained themselves. And gradually they became independent organisations, though still protected by the name of their master and still owing service to him when called upon. And when they had theatres the 'lord's room' was at their patron's disposal.

The deciding factor in the further development of the actors' companies was the growth of London and of the Court under the Tudors. The actors were quick to see here a steady market for their entertainments and the possibility of regular employment and a settled life. When we first hear of theatres in London we find them in the form of inn-yards adapted with a stage. And the inns thus used as theatres were advantageously sited. Some, probably the earliest, lay in the outskirts upon the main roads leading into the City, the Saracen's Head in Islington upon the North Road, the Boar's Head and the Red Lion in Whitechapel in the east, the Tabard in Southwark to the south, tapping the traffic in all directions. Others were situated in the heart of the City, in Bishopsgate, Gracechurch Street or Ludgate, the Bell, the Bull, the Cross Keys, the Bel Savage. Here were the homes of the professional Elizabethan drama before the days of Shakespeare, during the first twenty years of the reign of Elizabeth. A group of actors, having made its way to London with its waggon of costumes and properties, and its play-books, would seek its pitch in some such inn. It would come to an agreement with the landlord, generally to pay him some share of the takings, and the yard would be reserved for their use after midday dinner. The arrangement suited both parties, for the plays brought custom to the inn and added to its attractions, while the inn was a convenient home for the players with a ready-made audience and a ready-made play-house.

The next step, there is good reason to believe, was the entire

occupation of an inn, converted to the sole use of the actors.<sup>1</sup> So it was, apparently, with the Red Lion and Boar's Head in Whitechapel and possibly the Cross Keys in Gracechurch Street, with permanent stages and 'scaffolds' or stands for spectators. From this it was a short way to the erection of a new building for the especial purpose of a theatre. This was the happy thought, probably, of one of the many small financiers who began to see the possibilities of the new industry of the stage. John Brayne was financing the building of a stage and seats in the Red Lion in 1567. And in 1576 we find him providing the money for the erection of the Theatre in Shoreditch, in co-operation with his brother-in-law James Burbage the actor, then manager of Leicester's Men. The decisive step was taken. With the provision of a permanent theatre the way was open for the development of both the trade and the art of the actor. The experience of generations guided the builders of this and of other theatres which soon sprang up in London. The drama, hitherto subject to the conditions of its temporary homes, now had a say concerning its demands of its vehicle, the stage.

In the main, however, the new theatres followed traditional lines in their structure. The inn-yard surrounded by a gallery leading to guest-chambers was the foundation of its plan. The circular shape of the Globe in Southwark was the obvious improvement suggested by the bull-baiting ring, with its greater convenience for seating spectators, giving all a fair view of the stage.

The sites of the new theatres were determined by two factors. First, there was the opposition of the City, in fear of plague of body and soul alike, to theatres within its walls, which relegated them to the suburbs. Second, there was the need to keep the theatres, nevertheless, as accessible as possible to the City and to seat them within districts of growing population. The Theatre and the Curtain lay in Moorfields close to Shoreditch. The Rose, the Swan, the Globe and the Hope exploited the south bank of the Thames, in the heart of Southwark and with easy access by

<sup>1</sup> In 1578 I find Brayne, Burbage's partner in the Theatre, purchasing the George Inn in Whitechapel in order to use it as a theatre. He was, however, forbidden to establish a theatre there.

London Bridge or by boat to Westminster and the City. The Fortune was set in the area just outside Cripplegate, in Golden Lane, and the Red Bull served the needs of the dense population of Clerkenwell, in St John's Street.<sup>1</sup> The instant success of Burbage and Brayne in the Theatre led to these other ventures, with the result that during the last quarter of the sixteenth century London became amply provided with permanent theatres, large and solid structures which aroused the wonder and admiration of foreign visitors to London, as well as the indignant dismay of Puritan preachers against the stage, and which were a visible sign of the great prosperity of the industry of the theatre.

Most of these theatres were owned by investors like Francis Langley, who built the Swan, or Philip Henslowe, who built the Rose and the Fortune. The companies of actors who used them had much the same relations with the owners as they had had with the landlords of the inns, and were merely his tenants during such time as they could agree together, an unsatisfactory arrangement. Usually the landlord received for his share one-half of the gallery takings. Sometimes he acted also as financier to the company, when improvident actors and playwrights tended to fall into perpetual debt to him and into virtual servitude, which was even more unsatisfactory. Such was the case with those companies which dealt with Henslowe, at whose theatres Marlowe's great plays were produced, the famous Edward Alleyn playing their heroes, Faustus or Tamburlaine. Alleyn was Henslowe's son-in-law and, alone of the Admiral's Men, made a fortune out of his acting and his share of the profits, retiring thereafter, Lord of the Manor of Dulwich and founder of Dulwich College.

But it was otherwise with the company to which Shakespeare belonged during the greater part of his career, after some years spent as actor and dramatist at the Theatre with Lord Strange's Men. The members of his company, patronised successively by Lord Hunsdon, then Lord Chamberlain, by his son, who held the

<sup>1</sup> The Theatre and the Curtain in 1576, the Rose in 1587, the Swan in 1595, the Globe in 1598, the Fortune in 1599, the Red Bull about 1605, and the Hope in 1613.

same office, and by King James himself, during most of the time of Shakespeare's connexion with them, had their theatres to themselves and more or less in their own hands and ownership. Among their number was Richard Burbage, their leading tragic actor, the son of James Burbage who built the Theatre, John Heminge and Henry Condell, the editors-to-be of the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays, and William Kenpe, the great comic actor. In 1598 they decided to leave Shoreditch and move to Southwark, where they erected the Globe theatre on the Bankside at the joint expense of the chief members of the company, including Shakespeare. It was their own theatre, and for the first time we have the actors masters in their own house. No wonder that the history of the Globe theatre is one of glory as well as of prosperity, that its company was the most solidly organised of all, in the highest repute, attracting to itself the best actors and the finest dramatic work of the age, and was fittingly chosen, when James came to the throne, to be the King's Men. Shakespeare was working, as actor and dramatist, under the fairest and most stimulating conditions that the time could afford.

From 1608 onwards the company had two theatres. In that year they obtained a lease of a theatre in the Blackfriars, consisting of a hall and adjacent rooms converted to that purpose.<sup>1</sup> The Globe, unroofed and open to the sky, was more suitable for summer use, while the Blackfriars, an indoor theatre, was better adapted for winter playing.<sup>2</sup> It was in these two theatres that the plays of Shakespeare's maturity were performed. And to them the comfort and dignity of the houses, the quality of the plays, and the excellence of the acting, attracted all that was best in Elizabethan audiences. The evidence is clear that Shakespeare's relations with his fellow-actors were intimate and happy, and that all conspired to draw from him the highest and completest art that his great genius could beget.

<sup>1</sup> For the history of the Blackfriars theatre, see below, pp. 15-16, 18-20.

<sup>2</sup> There is some evidence that the audience at the Blackfriars was likely to be more select than that at the Globe. In the earlier years of the use of the two theatres, the company possibly allowed for this in their provision for both. In time, the Globe sank definitely to second place.



## THE BOYS' COMPANIES

The acting of plays seems to have been a regular feature of Tudor education both in schools and in universities. In 1567, for example, I find the guardian of a boy, anxious to prove that he had had him brought up in learning and 'like a gentleman child', bringing evidence of his proficiency in the part he was to take in a play at his Blackfriars school. The boy also sang in St Faith's choir. He was then under twelve years of age.<sup>1</sup> Here was the material of which a number of boys' companies were composed. The Boys of St Paul's took part in the public performance of a miracle play in 1378. The Children of the Chapel Royal, under their master, from furnishing music to the Court of Henry IV, came to be trained also for dramatic performances at Court under Henry VIII. The Boys of St Paul's similarly presented interludes before Henry VIII, led by John Heywood, the writer of their plays, and Sebastian Westcott their master. Other great schools and chapels contributed to such activities. Such boys' companies shared the patronage of the Court with professional adult companies, and in the end some of them came to be professionally organised for public performances. In 1576 we find the Children of the Chapel performing at a theatre opened in Blackfriars, in part of the buildings of the dissolved monastery, by Richard Farrant, who had come to some financial agreement with their master, William Hunnis. And a few years later the Paul's Boys, under Thomas Giles, joined them there, acting Lyly's plays publicly in 1584. The Paul's Boys continued later as a separate organisation in their own theatre near St Paul's, for the profit of Giles and Lyly, until about 1590. The company was revived again ten years later, managed by Edward Peers and Thomas Woodford, with plays by Marston, Chapman and Middleton, but came to an end about 1606. So also the Children of the Chapel are found again at Blackfriars after an interval, in 1600, under Nathaniel Giles, their master, and his financial partner Henry Evans, acting plays of Ben Jonson, Chapman, Marston and

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. c. 24/80.

Day. They were reorganised as Children of the Queen's Revels, indicating how far the process of professionalisation had taken them from their ancient status, and continued 'under varying names and managers, moving to a Whitefriars theatre in 1609, until about 1615. The adult companies had, in the end, beaten the boys out of the field.

In the early history of the Elizabethan stage 'the literary quality of the boys' plays, as well as the weight of custom, gave them an advantage. They could furnish the grace of music, too. But the men's companies, as they developed, allied to themselves scholar-writers and produced their own dramatists of genius. Moreover, they attracted into their ranks the best boy actors as they grew up, and trained their own boy apprentices. So they could offer to the Court as to the public all the qualities of the boys' performances and in addition the deeper passion, realism and humanity of adult acting. But there is no doubt that the Blackfriars Children were formidable rivals even to Shakespeare's company at the Globe at the end of the sixteenth century.

### COURT AND PRIVATE PERFORMANCES

The evidence of the repute in which his company was held may well be found in the frequency with which they were invited to perform away from their theatres in places where it was an honour to provide such entertainment. It was, moreover, a source of profit of great importance in a company's budget. £10 was the price paid by Queen Elizabeth and King James for the performance of a play at Court.<sup>1</sup> And when plague closed the theatres and deprived the King's Men of their ordinary sources of revenue in London, they were kept in being and in practice for Court plays by gifts amounting to as much as £40 in one year from their royal patron. The Master of the Revels at

<sup>1</sup> In 1595 Henslowe was drawing up to £3 a day as landlord of the Rose, though his average share was no more than 30s. He took as his share half the receipts for the galleries. But we cannot with certainty deduce the whole 'house' from this. About 1616 the Red Bull, at its very best, took in £8 or £9 a day. When after 1628 Sir Henry Herbert, then Master of the Revels, took 'benefits', they amounted to about £7 at the Globe and £16 at the Blackfriars.

Court chose plays and companies for the Queen's or the King's amusement, especially at the Christmas season, the performances being given at the royal palaces. The Inns of Court also celebrated great occasions with dramatic entertainments. The fledgling lawyers were especial lovers of the theatre. They gave their own shows, and they also brought in the professionals, as on the famous occasion when Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* was performed, as part of the revels, on a Grand Night at Gray's Inn in 1594. Finally, it was the fashion for the nobility to present plays for the amusement of their guests in their own houses, in celebration of a wedding, for example, or in honour of some notable visitor. So we see, in the play of *Sir Thomas More*, how More sends for the Cardinal's Men to act before his guests. And Shakespeare himself gives pictures of similar performances in private houses, as in *Hamlet* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is a matter of great interest to consider how far plays were actually written for such occasions, and there is much to be said for the belief that some of Shakespeare's own plays were so devised. It may well be that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was written and first acted for the celebration of some noble wedding, and that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was in fact written by royal command for a special Court performance. There can be no manner of doubt that the name and fame of Shakespeare were known to all interested in the theatre and drama, and that he and his fellows bore constantly in mind the needs and tastes of those higher circles before whom it was their pride to be chosen to perform. For the most part, however, plays selected for Court performance were taken from among those tried and proven by public performance. Thus intimately was the Court theatre bound up with the public theatre. The same drama and the same actors ministered to the delight of both, in the main. And this was a happy omen. For if the Court elevated the drama by its critical or special demands, the general audience ensured the sturdy health and varied appeal of a drama that was bound to be truly national to satisfy it. It says much for both that Shakespeare was able to gratify both equally with the same poetry, the same wit and humour, and the same stories in dramatic form.

## THE 'PRIVATE' THEATRES

It is obvious, however, that the stage at Court or in a private house differed from that in a 'public' theatre. In the former the plays were acted indoors, in a hall, and by artificial light. The main features of such performances were paralleled in the 'private' theatres of the Elizabethan age. In them we have the third category of professional London theatres, to add to the inn-yard theatres and the new 'public' theatres.

We have seen that Shakespeare's company used such a theatre in the Blackfriars from 1608 onwards. The refectory of the monastery had long before served the same purpose, when Lyly wrote plays adapted to this stage and to the capabilities of the Children of the Chapel and the Children of Paul's. The Paul's house was evidently of the same type as the Blackfriars, save that it was circular in shape instead of rectangular. It may well be that in Lyly's day both houses catered especially for a select audience. But when they were revived towards the end of the century both were more popular. St Paul's at any rate thrived then on topical plays of local interest to the citizens in the heart of the City.

The first Blackfriars theatre was closed when the owner of the property retook possession of it from the managers of the Children of the Chapel. But in 1596 James Burbage bought a lease of a part of it and reconstructed the theatre. Local opposition prevented its re-establishment for four years. Burbage died in 1597, and in 1600 his sons Richard and Cuthbert let it to Evans to house the reorganised Children, who were dangerous competitors with Shakespeare's company at the Globe, and are referred to in *Hamlet* as 'little eyases' who spoil the art and business of their betters. They were troubled by plague, by the censorship, and by quarrels among the partners, and in the end Evans surrendered his lease. In 1608 a new lease was made at a fixed rent of £40 to a syndicate which included Shakespeare and his fellows Heminge, Condell and Sly. Thus the competition of the Blackfriars children was eliminated, and the theatre now came into the possession of the company which already owned the Globe.

The King's Men also took over the best of the boy actors, by whom the company was materially strengthened.

Such theatres were known as 'private' theatres as distinct from 'public' theatres. The term had little real meaning, for they were used precisely as were the others. They were open to all who would pay for entry, though the charges were higher.<sup>1</sup> In structure, & is true, they resembled the halls of private houses, though galleries were added in the course of reconstruction as theatres, and permanent seats, probably on a raised incline in the body of the hall. These differences in structure and stage conditions make the term a useful one in discussions of the Elizabethan stage.

It is of importance to realise, however, that Shakespeare's latest plays were acted both at a 'public' theatre, the Globe, and at a 'private' theatre, the Blackfriars, and by the same actors. The conclusion is inevitable that by then there was some measure of similarity in methods of production at both. The Blackfriars theatre was remodelled to some extent by Burbage in 1596, twenty years after he had built the Theatre and shortly before the Globe was planned. He can hardly have failed to profit by his experience in the designing of both new theatres, though it is not known what was the nature of his reconstruction of the Blackfriars. The 'private' theatre used more machines than the 'public' theatre, as we shall see. And the style of acting of a boys' company in a 'private' theatre, before a select company, was different. It was more intimate than that of the 'public' theatre, and less life-like of necessity. Such acting would not have served for the heroic drama, built on a larger scale in all things, of Marlowe for example. The children could hardly have acted satisfactorily *Tamburlaine* or Shakespeare's *Richard III*, though we know they did in fact perform *Jeronimo*. When we come to the later 'private' theatres, and above all to the Blackfriars when occupied by adult actors, we have to consider the probable results of some decades of development in the theatre and the drama, and the certainty of the

<sup>1</sup> The charges at the 'public' theatres ran from a penny to a shilling; at the 'private' theatres, which were definitely expensive, from sixpence to half a crown.

mutual influence exerted by the 'private' and 'public' theatres one upon another. The 'public' theatre with its adult actors must have ensured a more natural and convincing presentation of characters of men, though there is no doubt whatever of the excellence of boy actors in women's parts and of their power to give them life. The 'private' theatre, in return, must have toned down the rant and declamation of the 'public' theatre. And this higher conception of the art of acting, to which both 'private' and 'public' theatres contributed, is set forth by Hamlet who, speaking surely for Shakespeare, urges the virtues of moderation and natural acting upon the visiting players, in words which are too often taken to refer to dramaturgy instead of histrionics.

An examination of the plays written for 'public' and 'private' theatres respectively after 1600 gives evidence of such an approximation. In 1604 Marston's *The Malcontent* could be acted 'in folio' at the Globe by Shakespeare's company as well as 'in decimo-sexto' by the Revels Children at the Blackfriars, with a little padding to fill up the time taken by musical interludes, a feature of the 'private' theatres. How far the 'public' and 'private' theatres influenced each other in other respects is a problem of great interest and difficulty to the student of Elizabethan staging.

### ELIZABETHAN STAGING

In the matter of Elizabethan staging we have to keep in mind two main threads in its history. First, we have to think of the elementary mother-wit stage of the early professional players making the most of their hall or inn-yard stage, practising the art of improvisation with such properties and costumes as they could carry about with them, innocent of all attempt at scenic illusion or localisation of their scene. Secondly, we have the cultivated stage of the Court, the universities with their academic drama, and the Inns of Court. With them, we find clear traces of the kind of staging that was practised by the Italian Renaissance theatre which used structural 'houses' and painted back-cloths in perspective as a unified setting for its plays, the

action being confined to the limited locality represented. This method of staging was, however, modified by the needs of such romantic plays as the Court rejoiced in early in Elizabeth's reign, with their wider range of locality. The convention of 'multiple' staging, which used juxtaposed 'houses' representing localities distant from one another in turn as the action changed from one place to another, was the traditional method of the miracle plays, and modified the Italian influence at Court.

The first 'private' theatres emulated this Court staging, and Lyly's plays illustrate both 'unified' and 'multiple' setting. In *Alexander and Campaspe* we have the market-place as the unified locality, with structures representing the palace, Apelles' shop, and Diogenes' tub. In *Midas*, on the other hand, the action takes place in a variety of places and is not restricted to even a single country. We may observe that the 'unified' setting would have served for Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, and it was doubtless after this fashion that it was presented at Gray's Inn.

Had the drama continued as an art devised for artificial cultured taste, practised by boys and staged in 'private' theatres, this method of staging might have sufficed, and might have dominated the Elizabethan theatre. But such arrangements could not have been emulated by the professional companies in their early career, even if they had wished to do so. Such productions needed a permanent theatre, or a permanent storehouse and workshop like that of the Office of the Revels, and demanded financial resources beyond small corporate purses. By the time the permanent theatres were available for the men's companies, in a more prosperous season for the profession, these methods were unsuitable for other reasons. For the drama had developed the scope of its action far beyond the classical limits of a unified place. The romantic drama was the staple entertainment provided by the professional stage, confirming the wavering taste of the early Elizabethan Court-stage. But the 'multiple' setting provided by the Revels at Court for some play of chivalric romance, or for Lyly's *Midas*, was not followed by the 'public' theatre. It fell back upon the freer, less limited, if cruder methods of the wandering players, who used no 'houses'

and whose stage, or any given part of it, could represent successively several places in any one play. Whatever 'houses', as distinct from specific 'properties', the 'public'-stage used in its later development, were of a stock type, convertible to various uses for various plays or for various parts of a play. An admitted convention, moreover, allowed parts of the action to take place in an indefinite locality when in passage from one main centre of the story to another. Such was the basis of the method of staging which met the needs of the great Elizabethan drama in its highest development. But it had learned some lessons from the Court or 'private' stage.

It had learned, above all, to aim at some measure of stage realism. In particular, it sought to use all the resources at its command to aid the process of illusion. It used the physical structure of the 'public' theatre; it used properties; and it used dialogue. It did not use the art of the scene-painter or the scene-builder, nor, consequently, did it ever change the scene in the modern sense of the term. But, within these limits, it did all in its power to suggest locality and atmosphere for the action of the play. The Elizabethan play, moreover, was decorated by handsome and expensive dressing, the costumes being in the main Elizabethan, though modified where necessary by fancy and symbolism, and occasional historical suggestion.

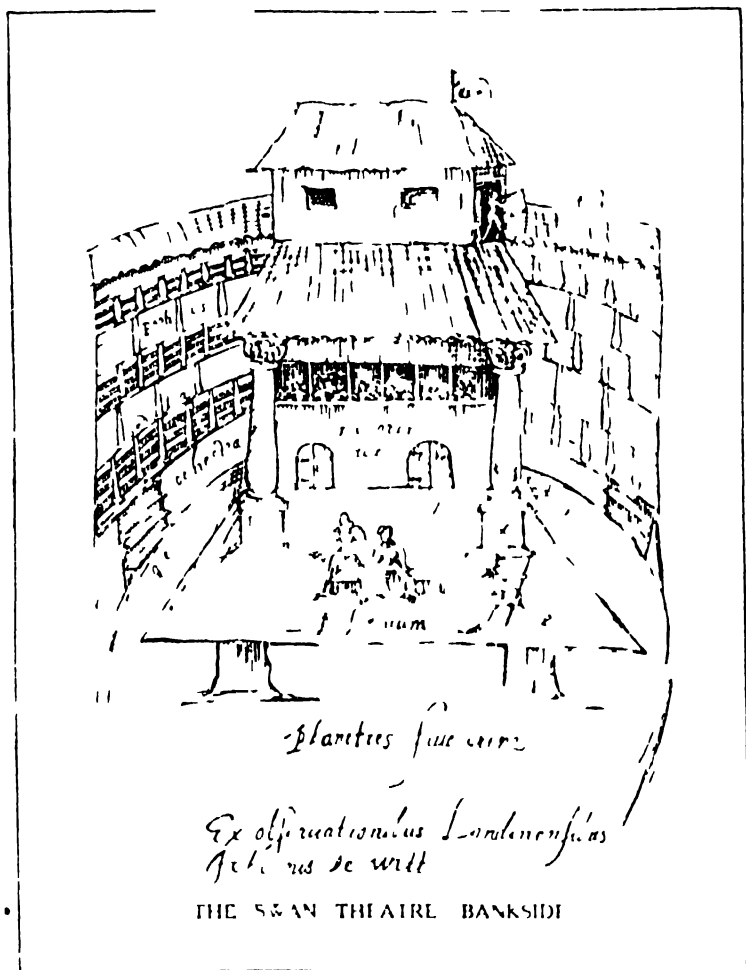
It is easy to realise the principal advantage of such methods of production, namely the supple freedom of scope and rapidity of movement in a drama thus loosed from the bondage of time and space. The drama could rival the epic. It kept a liberty of action which has been regained to-day only in the theatre of the screen, though the revolving stage does what it can to multiply scenes and free action from immobility, in the stage proper.

### THE TYPICAL STRUCTURE OF THE 'PUBLIC' THEATRE

A summary of the main features of the typical structure of the Elizabethan 'public' theatre may serve to illustrate the means by which dramatic illusion was furthered. It is certain that the



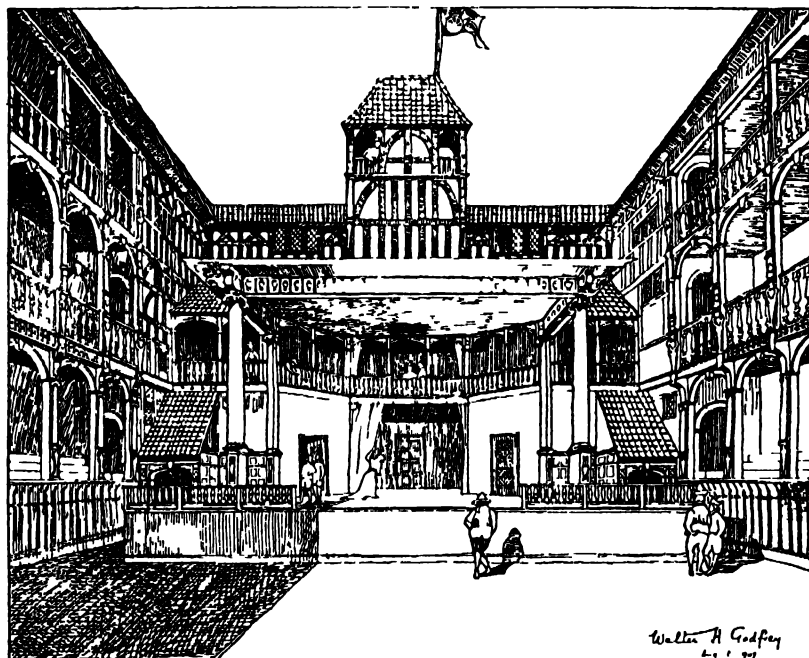
theatres differed from one another in detail, and that the later theatres must have modified the structure of the earlier theatres.



in the light of experience gained. For example, a drawing of the Swan theatre which has survived shows no central opening at the back of the stage, an essential feature of the Globe.<sup>1</sup> But the

The accuracy of this drawing, it is true, is suspect.

main outlines of the Shakespearian stage are clear enough, though there will always be obscure points of detail open to conjecture and debate. The evidence is more complete than one might expect to have come down to us. We have this contemporary sketch of the Swan stage, contemporary specifications for the builders of the Fortune and the Hope, and the whole



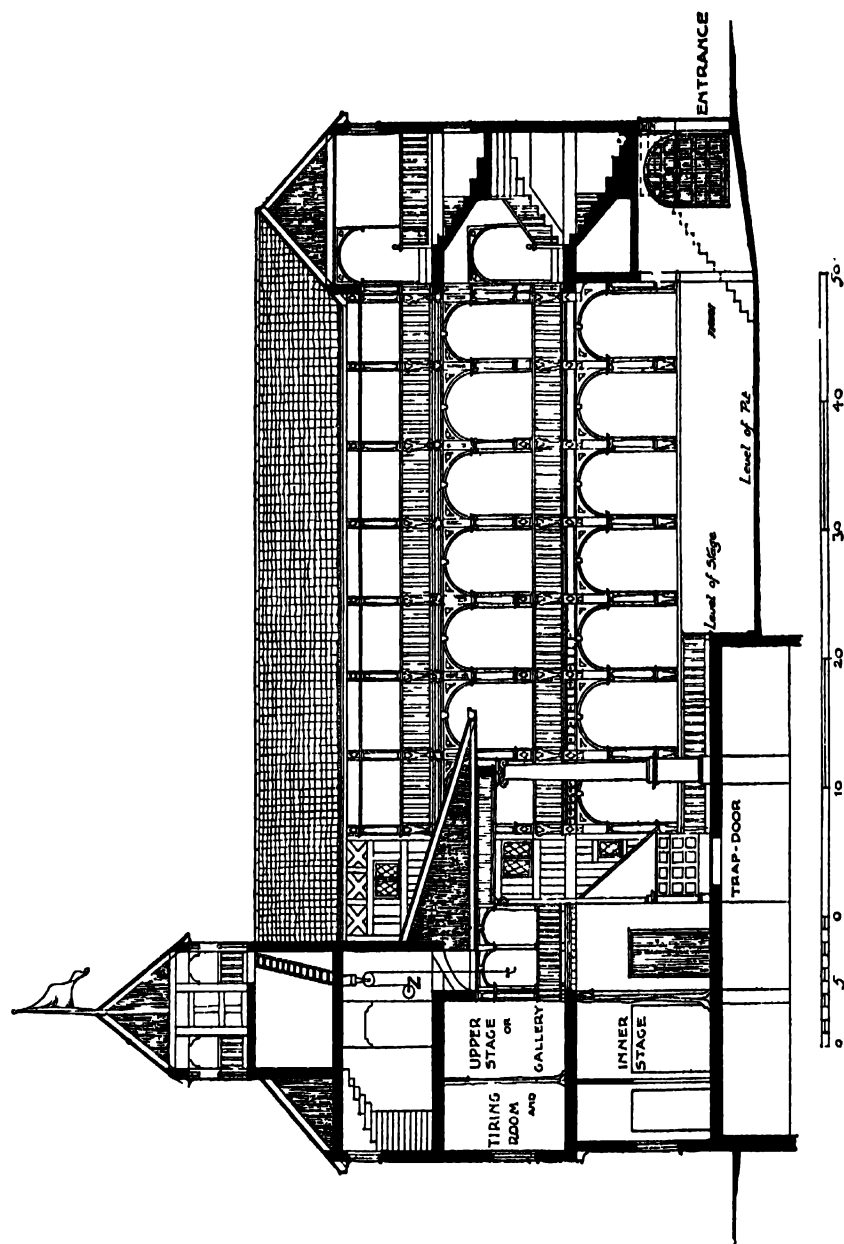
THE FORTUNE THEATRE<sup>1</sup>

body of stage directions of Elizabethan plays, together with hints in their dialogue. The structure was the logical development of the inn-yard plan modified by experience and by the influence of the Court or 'private' stages. The screen and side-doors of the hall of a great house may well have furnished the model for the stage-wall, and possibly for the gallery or balcony above the stage. There was a raised stage jutting out into a 'yard' or pit.

<sup>1</sup> See Note on p. 43.

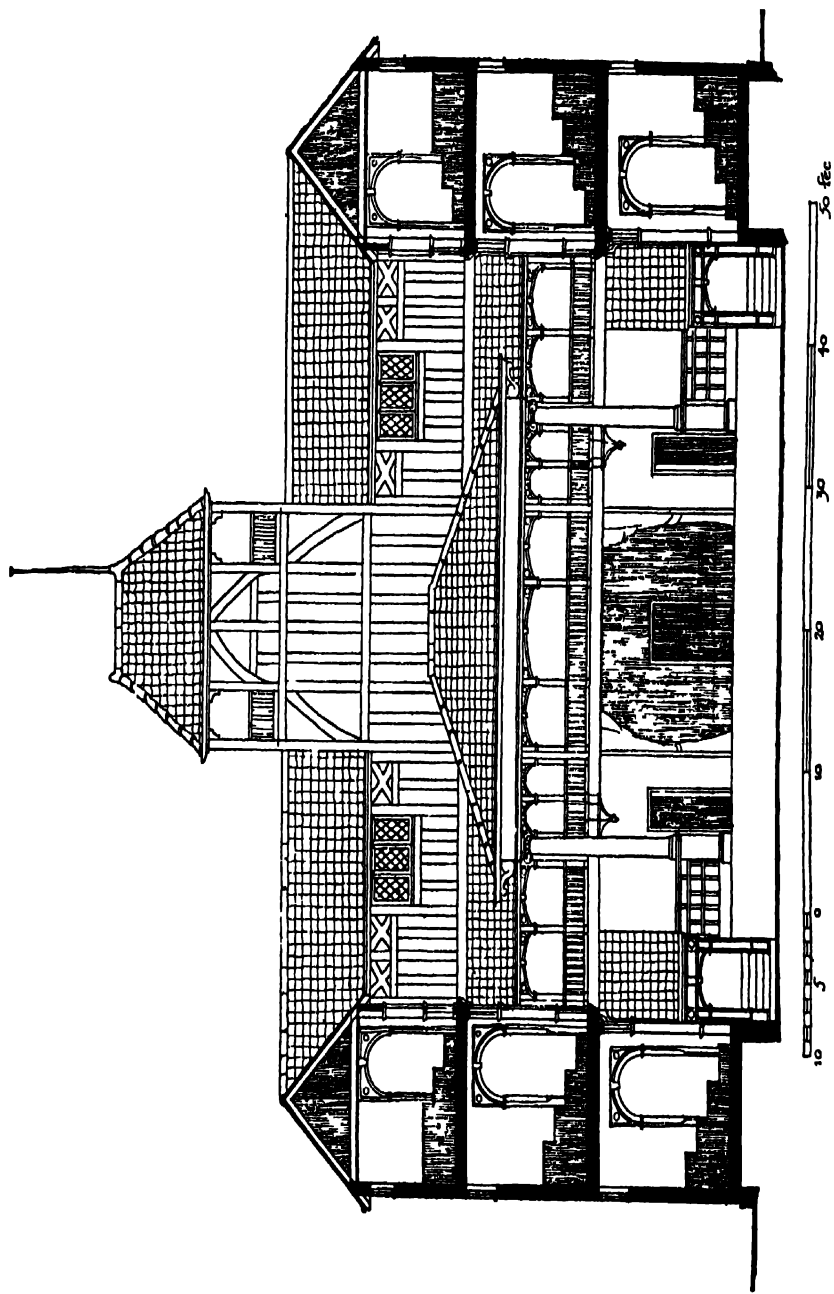
The audience stood in the pit into which it projected, or sat in the galleries built around the theatre walls and fronting the stage. A few even purchased stools on the stage itself or sat on the rushes with which it was strewn. One gallery was, as it were, continued behind the stage, which it probably overhung, and to which it formed an adjunct as an upper stage. Behind the stage were the tiring-rooms of the actors, in which they dressed and kept their properties, costumes and play-books, from which they emerged upon the stage and into which they entered upon their exits. In the wall of the stage, which was hung with arras or tapestry, were three openings, one door on each side, and a larger opening in the centre curtained off and revealing, when the curtain was drawn, a space behind the stage, being part of the tiring-room area. This space furnished a second adjunct to the main stage, an inner stage. All three openings were at the back of the stage and communicated with the tiring-rooms, which were built in three stories, so that the upper stage could be entered directly from them, as well as from the front by occasional scaling-ladders. An active man could, indeed, safely jump down from it on to the main stage. Over the whole stage-structure projected the 'heavens' or canopy, also accessible apparently from the third-story tiring-room. It stood upon posts resting on the stage and protected it from the weather. The spectators' galleries were roofed, but the pit or yard was open to the sky. Finally, the tiring-rooms communicated also with the space underneath the stage, which was boarded off, in communication with trap-doors constructed in the stage-floor, which afforded a further means of entrance and exit. Such were the structural resources of the stage in Shakespeare's day, summarily stated on the balance of evidence.<sup>1</sup> The actor and the dramatist could also count upon a considerable provision of properties. No doubt elementary erections of a common-form type supplemented the structure of the stage. But the especial needs of any one play were met by the use of properties which could be got on or off the stage, moved or wheeled through the

<sup>1</sup> It has been argued that there is evidence of side-doors also projecting at an angle to the stage-wall, with further balconies above each.



THE FORTUNE THEATRE: SECTION<sup>1</sup>

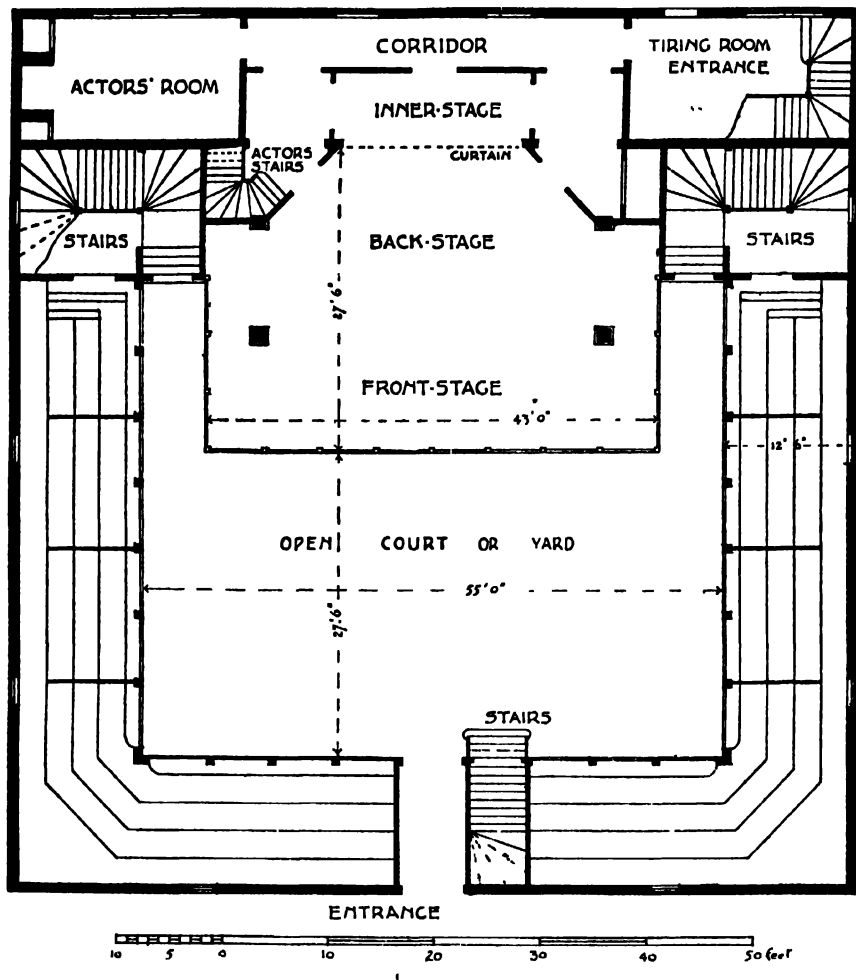
<sup>1</sup> See Note on p. 43.



THE FORTUNE THEATRE: SECTION

entrances, let down from the heavens, or brought up through a trap.

Some of the properties listed by Henslowe for the Admiral's

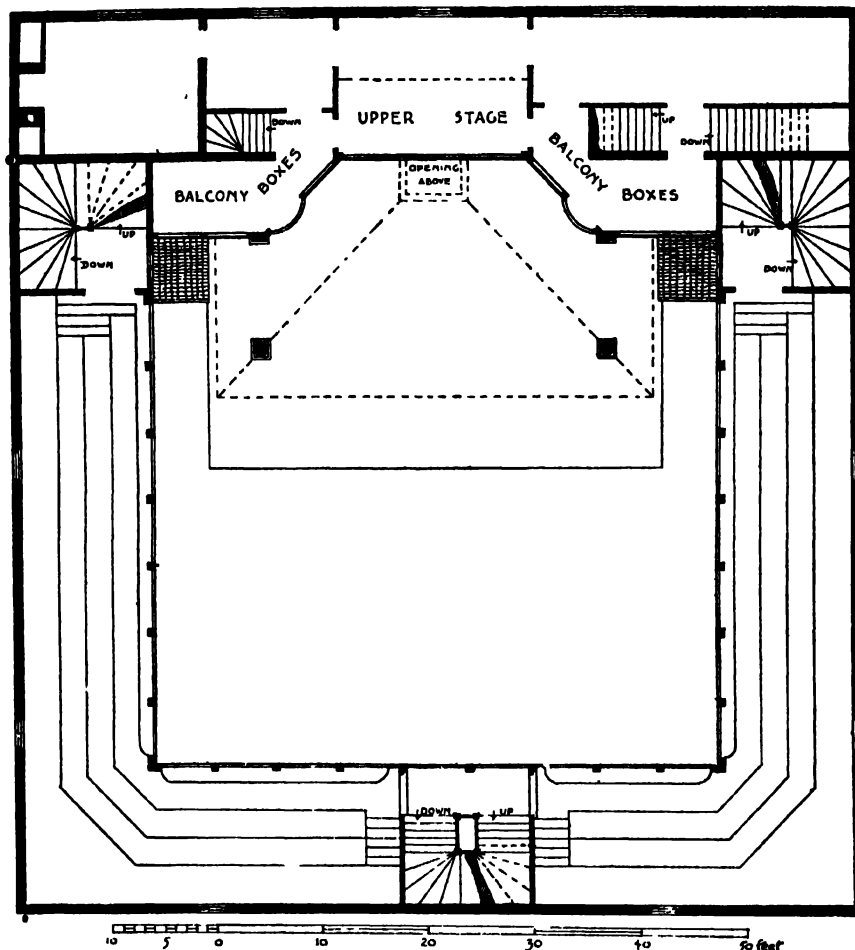


THE FORTUNE THEATRE: GROUND FLOOR PLAN<sup>1</sup>

Men indicate the extent of the material available. There are not only beds, trees, benches, tables or thrones and simpler properties. There is machinery to draw on and off a structural

<sup>1</sup> See Note on p. 43.

wall, for example. Or a gibbet can be set up. There is a cauldron for Barabas to fall into in *The Jew of Malta*, a 'great horse' for a Troy play, & Hell Mouth (a survival of miracle-play effects,



THE FORTUNE THEATRE: FIRST FLOOR PLAN

and a practicable structure), a tree of golden apples, and even a 'cloth of the Sun and Moon' and a 'city of Rome', probably the nearest approaches in a 'public' theatre to the painted canvases of the Court productions. It was the business of the

theatre craftsman to make the utmost and most ingenious use of these resources to further dramatic purposes. Properties used in the inner stage could be removed after closing the curtain, before that part of the stage was needed again. It is always to be understood that the action which centred on any given part of the stage could, as it were, borrow space from the main stage and spread outwards. In *Love's Labour's Lost* one door could represent the palace of the King of Navarre. The environment of the palace could then extend into the stage and yet remain localised. So also with the opposite door for the ladies of France and their territory in the Park. Thus again the inner stage need not be thought of as restricting the action set in it within its actual limits. It was a nucleus, and could be extended outwards without disturbing the illusion.

There is little doubt that in the later 'private' theatres the traditional settings of the early Blackfriars and Court performances continued to be practised. Marston could still write in 1606 of 'the fashion of the private stage' in presenting plays.<sup>1</sup> But the practice was certainly modified, by the need to cope with the romantic drama, into a compromise with the technique of the 'public' theatres, allowing for greater variety in locality. Their use of labels to indicate locality, a survival of an old practice disused in the 'public' theatres, may have been due to the exigencies of the compromise. There are, indeed, signs of occasional experiment in scene-shifting. Both at St Paul's and Blackfriars the stage-structure corresponded with parts of the basic structure of the Globe or Fortune. They had two side-doors and a central opening. And above the stage was a balcony which could be used as a music-room or as a place for stage-action 'above' on a small scale. And they had trap-doors in the stage.

Whether at the 'public' or the 'private' theatre, the producer did his share to aid the illusion. The actors made it easy to accept the illusion. The poet stimulated and suggested by his creative art. And the audience co-operated with their entertainers, susceptible of illusion and desirous of enjoying it. In a later chapter we shall see with what skill, ingenuity and tact

<sup>1</sup> In *Sophonisba*.



Shakespeare used the means at his disposal, how closely he was in touch with the practical craft of the theatre, how he progressed in his craft, and how he reconciled the increasing demands of his dramatic art with the conditions of his medium. It is evident that the Elizabethan theatre, far from hampering a competent dramatist, could furnish a satisfactory medium even for the dramatist of genius. Shakespeare occasionally calls attention to the deficiencies of the 'unworthy scaffold' of his 'wooden O', as in *Henry V* and *Pericles*. But by no stage could the vast sea or the epic battle of Agincourt be presented 'in their huge and proper life'. It is the medium itself, and not his Curtain or Globe stage, that lacks capacity for such great matters. And this is the thought underlying such particular appeals to the imagination of his audience. D'Avenant had exactly the same apology to make in 1656 for even the elaborate scenery of his *Siege of Rhodes*.

### THE MASQUE AND THE STAGE

The later years of Shakespeare's career pointed the way, however, to a theatre in which spectacle began to develop at the expense of drama. In the greatest days of the Elizabethan drama spectacle was in the main confined to such effects as can be obtained by splendour of costume, upon which the actors spared no expense, and which served to dress the stage to the admiration of the spectators. But with the reign of James came the vogue of the Court masque, which joined the dance and music with symbolic costume and also with increasingly elaborate scenic and architectural display, and machines, designed by such men as Inigo Jones, and carried out at enormous expense to the King. With this the King entertained his Court and himself, as well as foreign visitors whom it was desired to impress. Such displays had their inevitable repercussion on the professional stage, and could best be emulated in the 'private' houses, in enclosed rooms and by artificial light, before a more select audience. Shakespeare's later plays betray the influence of the masque and by their strong masque element show how he and

his company catered for the new taste. The masque in due time led not only to the opera in England, as devised by D'Avenant in the latter years of the Commonwealth, but also set the example for the elaborate *décor*s and machinery of the back stage in the Restoration theatre, which carried still further the development of scenery in the 'private' houses under masque influences. For the rest, the Restoration theatre continued to use the 'apron' of the Elizabethan theatre, jutting out from the main stage, for its principal action, and inherited from the Globe and the Blackfriars alike the tradition of the platform stage.

The new trend of the stage at the end of the Elizabethan period is evident from the supremacy of the Blackfriars 'private' house, which, like other 'private' theatres, the Cockpit or Salisbury Court, emulated the Court masque as an added attraction to their patrons.<sup>1</sup> Both the Cockpit and Salisbury Court theatres were revived at the Restoration. And D'Avenant, author of masques under Charles I and of spectacular operas in the Commonwealth, was also dramatist and theatre manager under Charles II.

The theatre was still far from the ultimate logical development of these tendencies into the complete picture stage of later times, with its use of a front curtain opening to reveal a set scene, with its devices for changing scenery by mechanical means, and with its action restricted to a limited artificial world of canvas and painted wood. But the trend towards scenic illusion was hastened by the masque, which helped towards the gradual subjection of the drama to its medium. With Kemble, Macready, Irving or Tree the drama was frozen into comparative immobility, and forgot the bright speed it had when Shakespeare planned plays of action, wide-ranging, vivified by poetic atmosphere and incarnate in powerful acting, for the framework of the Elizabethan theatre. A taper or two burning, a 'sleepy tune', and Shakespeare distilling night in words, imagery and thought, these things shut out all daylight from the Globe

<sup>1</sup> The capital examples of the growth of scenery before the Restoration are Suckling's *Aglaura* in 1637, Habington's *Queene of Arragon* in 1640, both at Blackfriars and at Court, Nabbes' masque, *Microcosmus*, at Salisbury Court in 1637, and D'Avenant's *Siege of Rhodes* at Rutland House in 1656.

theatre as darkness slowly descends, compelled by the art of the dramatist and actor, in *Julius Caesar*.

### THE REPERTORY OF PLAYS

The plays themselves came to the actors' companies both from actor-playwrights, members of the company which used them, and from free-lance dramatists from whom the company purchased a play outright. Or a company in financial straits might sell a play in its repertory to another company, or to a publisher, when, if printed, it became common property. A play once in the repertory might be revised, brought up to date, and rewritten, either by its author or, failing him, one of the company's 'poets'. All play-books were in charge of an officer of the company called the book-keeper, who also served as prompter. Henslowe's *Diary* gives us interesting details of the financier's dealings for his companies with dramatists bringing their goods to market, selling plays sometimes an act at a time, joining often with from two to four brother dramatists to hasten production in collaboration. The price of a play varied from a mere £4 to four or five times the amount in later years or if provided by a popular dramatist. It is Henslowe also who gives us facts about the run of a play at one of his theatres. A new play would be repeated, at short intervals, from six to seventeen afternoons according to its success with the audience. One play at the Rose had as many as thirty-two performances in three years. The average run of a play was about ten performances. And there were old plays that were constantly being revived, like Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* or Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*. The Admiral's Men bought as many as twenty-one new plays in one year to add to their accumulated repertory at the Rose, and the total number at their disposal must have been very great. But few plays survived after their first run to become tried favourites. The Elizabethans desired novelty. Henslowe's *Diary* always notes the performance of a 'new' play, which drew more spectators and takings. This involved notably intense activity during the acting season for both actors and dramatists.

## THE PERFORMANCE

Performances took place in the afternoon, after dinner, beginning at two o'clock and lasting generally two hours. Bills were printed and set up on convenient posts or distributed to advertise the performance. The entrance money was taken by 'gatherers' who stood at the main entrance and at entrances to stairs leading from the 'yard' to the galleries, taking the higher prices by instalments, as it were. The stage-hangings, if black, would be premonitory of a tragedy, if gay with mythological tapestry, of a comedy. Behind the curtain of the inner stage stood some actor peeping out to estimate the audience as it gathered. There might be the poet too in the tiring-room awaiting the fate of his play. The 'platt' or synopsis of the play was hung up on a peg for the actors to consult. 'Stage-keepers' were there to give mechanical help. And the 'book-holder' or prompter sat there with his prompt-copy, close to the inner stage. The actors were dressed and ready when a trumpet was sounded to give warning. Upon the third sounding the performance began. The play was introduced by a Prologue, dressed in a black cloak, to pray for favourable reception. Then followed the play proper. In the early days of the 'public' theatre it was probably acted straight through. But the practice of having intervals grew up with the development of music given by the boys of the 'private' theatres as an overture and between the acts, and spread to the 'public' theatres in later years. There are frequent indications of 'Musique' at the end of acts in Stuart times. And two intervals in a public theatre play of 1631<sup>1</sup> are marked by the prompter as 'Long' in a manuscript prompt-copy, at the end of Acts I and III. This may well have been the established custom of the theatre by then.

The Epilogue followed, generally some character in the play, to beg applause. The audience was apt to give clear indications of its views during the play. And it was a fashionable thing for a gallant to arrive late for his seat upon the stage, to pay no attention to the play, to mark his disapproval and to leave before

<sup>1</sup> Massinger's *Believe as you List*.

it ended. But a good response to the Epilogue would reassure the actors. It was followed in the 'public' theatres by an after-piece, called a jig. The jig was originally an individual song and dance, but it developed into a more elaborate affair, with three or more players and something of a plot, in fact into an elementary comic opera, generally on a theme that was anything but edifying. With this the entertainment concluded, and the audience dispersed in merry mood. The stage-keepers came out to take down the arras hangings, and the actor-sharers remained behind to count the takings,<sup>1</sup> or adjourned with the poet or with friends among the audience to a tavern for refreshment. For acquaintance with a Burbage, a Shakespeare, or a Ben Jonson, was a feather in the cap of an Elizabethan gallant, and cherished by some of the graver sort.

### THE ACTORS

The actors who acted in *Hamlet* were also competent, at any rate in the earlier stage of their career, to perform the lowly jig, to sing and dance expertly as well as with comic verve. They could, indeed, take charge of what we should now call 'variety' as well as 'legitimate' performances. A wrestling match in *As You Like It*, a fencing match in *Hamlet*, Sir Andrew Aguecheek's illustration of dancing feats in *Twelfth Night*, all would be genuine skilled exhibitions by trained experts. But we are not to think of the Elizabethan actor the more meanly for this. On the contrary. He was in every respect, as far as we can judge, better qualified for his profession than the generality of actors of to-day. Far too much, moreover, has been written upon the theme that the actor was then classed with vagabonds in the eyes of the law. Most of this is due to the excited enmity of Puritan opponents of the stage. The fact is that the actor's profession established itself as a legitimate occupation before Shakespeare joined it. It was recognised by royal letters patent as early as in 1574, and regulated ten years after by a royal officer, the

<sup>1</sup> This was certainly done, and the division made, after each day's performance, at Evans' Blackfriars theatre at any rate.

Master of the Revels. The Queen herself patronised a company from 1583 onwards, and Shakespeare and his fellows, on the accession of King James, were not only the King's Men, but Grooms of the King's Chamber. Edward Alleyn, of the Admiral's Men, as we have seen, died rich, lord of a manor, founder of a great school, and husband of the daughter of a famous Dean of St Paul's, Constance Donne. Heminge and Condell, fellows and friends of Shakespeare, were prominent parishioners of Aldermanbury and held office in the parish. Shakespeare himself was held in the highest esteem in Stratford as one of its worthiest and wealthiest citizens, bearing arms. They were all acceptably described in Courts of Law as 'gentlemen'. And when Richard Burbage, the great tragic actor, died, no less a person than the Earl of Pembroke grieved so much for his 'old acquaintance' that he refused to go to a play given at a great entertainment to the French Ambassador. It was a profession that a father might fairly put a boy to, though not a girl, for there were no women on the stage. It recruited itself with apprentices who served a leading actor or 'sharer', received a training, and graduated in due course from singing and from women's parts, and from tutelage, to man's estate and independent status.<sup>1</sup> A share in a company might be the reward of a good apprentice turned good journeyman in a company. Or a share might be purchased. For shares were as much permanent, saleable assets as any other kind of stock, as long as the company held together. A share in Queen Anne's Men was valued at £80 under James I, and could be bought and sold by actors entering or leaving the company.

It is true that not all companies had the solidity of that to which Shakespeare belonged, and most of them had chequered careers. But at its best the actor's profession was of settled dignity. We need not be surprised to find Shakespeare, in *Hamlet*, writing critically of the actor's art, with much contempt for its inferior professors. He knew what his plays owed to the acting

<sup>1</sup> The adult companies profited greatly by the recruitment of young actors from the boys' companies, in which they had had a thorough training and a fair education. Thus Shakespeare's company in 1608 had notable accessions from the Revels Children.

of his great fellows, just as the dramatist Webster knew what *The White Devil* owed to the genius of Richard Perkins at the Red Bull, where his tragedy was acted by Queen Anne's Men to his great satisfaction. Nor must we underrate the skill of the boy actors who acted women's parts, for there is contemporary evidence enough of their powers. The poorer companies, it is true, even in Shakespeare's day, had a leavening of less qualified, sometimes almost illiterate, journeymen or 'hirelings', who were paid from six to ten shillings a week for their services and even, if the week's takings were not satisfactory, as little as half a crown. But the profession was very much as it is to-day in this respect. And Shakespeare's plays were acted by the cream of Elizabethan actors.

His company was a stock company. And there are clear signs that there was some specialisation in their parts and that Shakespeare had to consider this in his work for them. At least, he certainly made the most of their especial gifts or peculiarities. I do not think we should read in *Hamlet* the words 'for he is fat and scant of breath' to refer to a portly Burbage but only to mean 'out of condition', as we should say to-day. For one thing, no leading man would consent to have these words said of him, if they bore that sense, lest ill-timed laughter should extinguish his heroic career for ever, and Falstaff remain the only part feasible for him to play. He could hardly have acted Othello, as we know he did. We may well believe that Edward Alleyn's parts,<sup>1</sup> as written by Marlowe for him at the Rose, suited his technique, an earlier technique of robust declamation and grandiose gesture, and even that Marlowe was influenced in his writing by this knowledge. Certainly it is true that when Joseph Taylor succeeded Burbage in the King's Men, and John Lowin was second leading man, the whole business of acting must have been toned down, made less individual, passion giving place to dignity or pathos, declamation to eloquence, in Shakespeare's last plays and in such plays as his successors provided for them. Shakespeare himself, in *Hamlet*, condemns on the one

<sup>1</sup> A large fragment of the manuscript of his part in *Orlando Furioso* has survived, at Dulwich College.

hand robustious exaggerated dealings in tragedy, and on the other immoderate and ill-regulated comic acting and licence in gagging and 'business'. He may well have had in mind the old comic 'star', Richard Tarlton, of an earlier generation, or his own fellow the famous William Kempe, the creator probably of his own Justice Shallow and certainly of Dogberry, who had left the company in 1600 to go on his morris dance 'all the way to Norwich and subsequently to repeat his dancing venture over the Alps to Rome, and was now a member of a rival company. Kempe was of the older school of comic acting, and it is probable that the disappearance of the formal clown or jester from Shakespeare's plays marks the end of the Kempe tradition in this company. Robert Armin, himself an author of plays, took his place as principal comic actor, followed later by Thomas Pollard, who excelled in literally 'fat' parts.

Well stocked as was the Chamberlain's-King's Company, it had to consider economy in the use of actors. And the large repertory necessary to an Elizabethan theatre forbade word perfection on the part of all members of the company in all its current plays. Parts were therefore extensively doubled, as we may see from certain surviving summaries of the action of a play, called 'platts', used by the prompter and containing the names of the actors playing each part, as also from the study of such a manuscript prompt-copy as that of Massinger's *Believe as you List*. Even so, the number of the cast increased rapidly from the four or five necessary for an old interlude to the minimum of nine or ten men with three or four boys required for most of Shakespeare's plays. The doubling, in the main, affected the minor parts. But it is clear enough that larger secondary parts also allowed doubling. There is no more interesting pastime than the attempt to cast an Elizabethan play, given the known names of the company, the characteristic parts generally allotted to each, and the possibilities of doubling. Once more, Shakespeare had to know his business. There was little place on the Elizabethan stage for 'native woodnotes wild' sung even by a great natural genius. Acting was a serious art, and justly demanded a skilled craftsman for its dramatist. Shakespeare knew



this, and so did another great dramatist, Webster, who gave high praise to Queen Anne's Men

for the true imitation of life, without striving to make nature a monster, the best that ever became them.

### THE AUDIENCE

Far from being miraculous flowers growing out of place in a field of thistles, Shakespeare's plays stand out in their proper setting, in harmony with their medium and their vehicle, and by no means wanting

that which is the only grace and setting out of a Tragedy, a full and understanding Auditory,

as Webster put it. Many dramatists, it is true, gird at the pit or groundlings, and appeal to more cultivated taste. Even Shakespeare has his fling, in *Hamlet*. But we must beware of such evidence. There was something of a fashion in this, something of desire to flatter the gentry. It still goes on to-day, and plays and actors are accused of 'playing to the gallery', though the gallery (the 'groundlings' of to-day) now houses, we are told, the soundest and most unprejudiced critical taste. Shakespeare could not play only to his high-priced balcony, or to the gallants smoking on the stage, or to the Court, and write up to them. It is true that there were differences in theatres and in audiences, between Shoreditch and Blackfriars. But *Romeo and Juliet* was written for Shoreditch. And the Globe was never an aristocratic theatre. His 'Prince Hamlet' pleased all, said a contemporary. The fact is that Shakespeare found fit hearers among all classes of London citizens. If they had a fault, it was that of uncritical catholicity of taste. It was the pit that above all demanded the poetic drama as well as mirth. It was they who rejoiced in patriotic historical plays and knew too little of the Court to be disillusioned. They saved the Elizabethan drama from becoming over-educated and urbanised, and preserved its strength and universality, despite theorists, men of wit and fashion, and experimenters like Ben Jonson. Incurably romantic and emotional,

they longed for romance even if they did, while in the theatre, crack nuts, buy and drink bottled ale, and occasionally fall to riot.<sup>1</sup> And Shakespeare, at heart in full sympathy with men of his own make, wrote at least as much for them as for their betters, and reconciled all in one delight.

### THE ENEMIES OF THE STAGE

The only discordant note was struck by two militant companies of dissidents. There were those who brought moral and theological argument to bear against the stage. They were unable to agree with the classical view, which Sir Philip Sidney pressed in defence of the stage (though he satirised the stage of his own day), that the drama was as morally profitable as it was delightful. Nor would they bow to the authority of the schools and universities, which used the play for educational purposes and gave their pupils the taste for it. Even within Oxford University there was dissension among heads of colleges, the Puritan John Rainoldes against the academic dramatist William Gager. And in London the battle of printed controversy was long and hot from 1577, a year after the Theatre was built, onwards. 'Vain Plays' were classed with dancing and dicing as evils by Northbrooke, and Stubbes in 1583 elaborated his *Anatomy of Abuses*. Gosson, once a writer of plays, turned and rent the stage in books. And from the pulpit at Paul's Cross notable preachers inveighed against plays as pagan entertainments, as schools of sin, as taking young and old away from divine service, as showing boys in female dress in despite of canon law, as socially dangerous. When, in 1583, a bear-baiting house in Paris Garden fell upon its spectators, the case was held to be proved by this judgment of God. In reply to these fulminations the young poet and dramatist Thomas Lodge wrote *Honest Excuses* in 1579, and Sir Philip Sidney later defended poetry in general and with it the stage and drama, in his *Apologie for Poetrie*, as did Nashe in his *Piers Penniless* in 1592. The drama

<sup>1</sup> We may remember that Bishop Latimer complained of the unruliness of distinguished audiences at sermons preached before the King, under Edward VI. And Dekker, in *The Gull's Hornbook*, is most severe on the gallants on the stage.

had for its function the presentation of moral lessons by example. And some modern critics have assiduously sought to vindicate Shakespeare on such grounds. The debate was profoundly irrelevant, and inconclusive.

But the second group of opponents, closely allied to the Puritans, not only talked, but acted. The Puritan campaign died down by the end of the century, but the simultaneous assaults of the City authorities upon the theatres, though overborne again and again, were never stifled. The theatre, as they saw it, was a centre of disturbance, a menace to good order within the City, and a pit of infection in days when the dreaded plague was endemic in London. It took apprentices from their work and brought them into evil company. The remedy was to close the theatres and banish the players, or, failing that, to remove the theatres from within the City walls to the suburbs. Against the City stood the noble patrons of the players, and the whole influence of the Court. It was a convenient fiction that the players' real function was to present their plays before the Queen, and they must be allowed to exercise themselves and rehearse their plays to that end. To forbid them to play publicly was therefore to interfere with their duty to the Queen and, worse still, with the Queen's pleasures. The Privy Council thus naturally interposed between the City and the players oppressed by their ordinances. Attempts were made to arrive at a compromise by regulations, from 1574 onwards. Their first result was the foundation of the suburban permanent theatres. The City succeeded, with the entire agreement of the Council, in enforcing temporary closures of all theatres during severe outbreaks of plague. This occurred from time to time throughout the Elizabethan period, and was a constant hazard of the actors' trade. But when the City authorities pressed their case too far, and challenged the Council more firmly in 1584, they were obliged to yield.

The final result of the conflict was that the supervision and licensing of plays, players, and theatres were taken out of their hands and put in charge of the Master of the Revels, a royal officer under the Lord Chamberlain, who had long supervised

performances at Court. To this day the Lord Chamberlain holds some of these powers in relation to the stage. The City took toll of the players in the form of contributions to their poor funds. But the Master of the Revels proceeded to develop a system of fees for licences which brought him in a handsome income. So the position of the players was increasingly strengthened by the support of a powerful vested interest.<sup>1</sup> There were still alarms and excursions. But during Shakespeare's time the only potent enemy of the theatres was the plague, which closed them for long periods both in 1592-4 and in 1603-4. During such closures, as also in summer, the companies could resort to provincial tours and travel, as in the days of their predecessors, with their waggon, their books and their costumes. In such circumstances, as well as in the great London theatres, were Shakespeare's plays performed. A wandering company of Yorkshire actors, in 1609, included the newly printed *King Lear* and *Pericles* in their repertory. A play, once printed, was at their disposal for sixpence, the price of the book. And the earliest texts of many Elizabethan plays bear the indications of the shortening and simplification which adapted them for representation 'on the road'. The King's Men often took Oxford in their circuit, and Cambridge too, less frequently. The title-page of the First Quarto of *Hamlet*, published in 1603, is our authority that they had performed Shakespeare's greatest play in both the university towns. There is a pleasant picture in a Cambridge University play of Burbage and Kempe among the students giving a lesson in the art of acting to some young aspirants to the theatre. This scene in *The Return from Parnassus* is surely a reminiscence of this or some other visit of Shakespeare and his fellows to the university. Hamlet, after all, had studied at Wittenberg, and would be at home in Oxford and Cambridge. So, we may be sure, would Shakespeare himself, though no university man.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Tilney, Master of the Revels during most of Shakespeare's career, was a relative of the Lord Admiral, the patron of the Admiral's Men, who indeed procured the post for him, and said so in a Court of Law.

<sup>2</sup> His *Venus and Adonis* found its place, we are told, under the pillows of undergraduate enthusiasts.

The moral is clear. *Hamlet*, most famous of all stage-plays, met with success and acceptance in 'public' and 'private' theatres alike in Elizabethan days, as also in the hall of a university town, or at Court, on a great variety of stages, before all manner of audiences. In 1607 it was even acted on board an India-bound ship, the *Dragon*, by its officers and men, off Sierra Leone, with waist and poop and companion for its stage. The play continues to this day to exercise its power, with undiminished vitality, on the stage as in the study, even when it is forced into the Procrustes bed of a theatre for which it was not written. But it must have air, speed, continuity, and the sequence native to it. So with other plays of Shakespcare, all married to the Elizabethan medium in which Shakespcare worked and was at home, and which he helped to develop and modify. When scholarship, freed from mere antiquarianism, is allied to theatrical craftsmanship in the service of these plays with their essential dramatic stuff, we can still find them triumphant over time and fashion, not only as literature, but as plays.

## NOTE

The reconstruction of the 'Fortune' on p. 24, and the sections and plans on pp. 26-9, were prepared by Mr W. H. Godfrey, in consultation with the late William Archer and Dr W. J. Lawrence in 1907, from the details given in the Agreement, now at Dulwich (*Henslowe Papers*, ed. W. W. Greg, p. 4). This contract gives the exact measurements of the ground plan (p. 28) but declares that the stage is to be 'Contrived and fashioned like vnto the Stadge of the saide Plaie howse Called the Globe'. The plan of the stage is chiefly justified by study of the text and the stage directions of the plays it accommodated. Upon its main features there is fairly general agreement, but certain details are still subjects of dispute;—the exact disposition of the side doors, the dimensions of the inner stage and of the spaces behind, and the existence of the public staircases at the sides.

EDD.



# SHAKESPEARE AND ELIZABETHAN ENGLISH

BY

G. D. WILLCOCK

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## ELIZABETHAN ENGLISH IN GENERAL; THE LANGUAGE OF THE COURT AND OF THE STAGE

ANY well-annotated edition of a Shakespeare play introduces one to some of the types of linguistic change which, together with alterations in customs and thought, make a veil or barrier between the sixteenth century and ourselves. Some of the commonest Shakespearian tags—for example, ‘Thus conscience does make cowards of us all’—require a linguistic note of some kind to enable the beginner to understand their original, Elizabethan, meaning. The points which play the maximum part in ordinary language notes on Shakespeare are concerned with lexicography (additions and losses in vocabulary), semantics (alterations in the meanings and associations of words), accidence and syntax (changes in inflexion and construction). In addition there are equally far-reaching phonological changes. Our phonetic equivalents for vowel and consonant symbols are not the same as the Elizabethan: the symbols *ee* (as in *meet*) and *ea* (as in *beat*) have now only one phonetic value and the words can rhyme; in the late sixteenth century the two symbols still denoted two distinct vowel sounds. There have as well been countless alterations in the pronunciations of individual words, of which the most prolific cause has been the desire to make the pronunciation fit a

traditional spelling. This tendency, growing with the growth of the reading population, has been responsible for the restoration of *e* for *a* before *r* (as in *servant*, pronounced and frequently written in Shakespeare's day *sarvent*) and of initial *h* in words of Romance origin like *humour* (contrast *hour*); innumerable single words like *soldier* and *somewhat* have been phonetically remade by this modern distrust of oral tradition—*sojer* and *summat* were in Shakespeare's day not vulgarisms but good enough for royalty. These phonological changes play an inconspicuous part in ordinary annotation, and it may therefore be forgotten that Shakespeare's English did not sound like ours. If we could recall Richard Burbage to speak a passage for us in good London English of his time, we should, if we had any phonetic training or were reasonably quick of ear, have little difficulty in understanding, but it would sound to us like 'dialect'; we should be able to spot resemblances to modern Cockney (particularly in some of the diphthongs) or to some Midland pronunciations or even to American or Scots. We should probably admit that the general weakening and partial loss of *r* in modern 'Received Standard' has resulted in a lack of acoustic richness and energy in our speech as compared with Shakespeare's.

Some acquaintance with these and other ascertained facts concerning contemporary speech habits is necessary before we can distinguish between the liberties in language which Shakespeare *finds* and those which he *takes*. Purists from Dryden onwards have sometimes accused Shakespeare of taking liberties with 'correct' usage when he is merely being Elizabethan and availing himself of a natural and legitimate flexibility which the language has since lost. His accentuation repeatedly differs from ours (as in *canónize* for our *cánonize*) and many words appear with a variable stress (as in *cómplete* beside *compléte*), because late Tudor English was passing through a transitional phase in the accenting of Romance words and recent polysyllables. Over-modernised editions sometimes by spelling or punctuation suggest a 'liberty' where none exists: in Portia's last speech in *The Merchant of Venice* we find the line

And charge us there upon intergatories



which suggests that Shakespeare has by 'poetic licence' shortened, and changed the stress of, *interrogatory*. But reference to Henslowe's Diary and other documents where the spelling is 'phonetic' shows that the word (a well-established legal term) was current in some form like *intérget(e)ry*—there has been no 'licence', poetic or otherwise. A very detailed knowledge of the contemporary spoken language is sometimes necessary for the judging of Shakespeare's puns by the standards that should prevail in punning circles, especially as these puns are also frequently disguised or distorted in modern editions. In the play-scene in *Hamlet* (Act III, Sc. ii, l. 249) Hamlet (nowadays) replies to the King's request for the title of the play: 'The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically' (*i.e.* by a figure of speech or trope). From the evidence of Q1 the actor probably said at one time: 'Mouse-trap. . . trapically', availing himself of a change from *o* to *a* in certain words of which other examples are *stap* (for *stop*) and *Gad* (for *God*). This *a*-pronunciation was originally a south-westernism,<sup>1</sup> and was probably brought to town by Raleigh and other Devonians. In the next line (still in Q1) the unexpected location of the murder in 'guyana' prompts (if it be not a mere blunder) the speculation whether the knowing in the audience were not expected to see more than a somewhat affected pun.<sup>2</sup>

Though Elizabethan English was characterised by much liberty of usage, the idea of a Standard Language was well above the horizon by Shakespeare's time. The most conclusive evidence for this is provided by the critic 'Puttenham' in his *Arte of English Poesie*, 1589.<sup>3</sup> Here the young poet is advised to take the 'vsuall speach of the Court and that of London and the shires lying about London within LX myles and not much aboue'. The desirable form of speech is definitely identified with southern

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Wyld, *History of Modern Colloquial English*, Ch. IV.

<sup>2</sup> In Q1 the relevant lines run:

Mouse-trap: mary how trapically: this play is

The image of a murder done in guyana.

The *Discouerie of Guiana* (describing Raleigh's voyages) had been published in 1596 and re-issued (by Hakluyt) in 1598.

<sup>3</sup> Bk. III, Ch. 4, *Of Language*. The identity of the author is still under dispute.

and not northern, and the novice is as strongly warned against the usage of the universities as he is against archaism and rusticity. In the matter of standardisation distinctions must always be drawn between the printed, the written and the spoken forms of the language. Thanks to the tidying efforts of the compositors, Elizabethan printed books show practically all writers as using the same general brand of English. Their MSS.; when extant, reveal far more personal caprice as well as linguistic variations; nevertheless, as Puttenham notes, the written language had proceeded much further towards unification than the spoken. Some speakers, as again Puttenham notes, acquired two dialects by adding the courtly norm to their own home-grown local speech. Others, like Sir Walter Raleigh, brought their broad Devon to Court and kept it there.

It is very generally held that in the late Elizabethan period a specially close connexion existed between good colloquial and written language. The more tortuous forms of prose rhetoric must always have taken shape on paper, but it is possible to find works which owe their peculiar quality to a harmony between the language of books and the living voices of men. Both Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* and Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* suggest the transference to paper of a trained but not artificial capacity to speak well and at length; they have the lightness and urbanity of cultivated discourse. Puttenham's sentences, indeed, sometimes need the inflexions of the living voice to prevent ambiguity. This ease of interchange between a dignified spoken, and a flexible written, word was, for the dramatist, all to the good. He is perhaps hampered at the present day by a wider gulf between the literary and the colloquial.

From such works as these, from letters, despatches and recorded sayings of statesmen and wits, it is possible to guess at the scope of the best Elizabethan speech. But this is not to arrive at the native speech of Shakespeare, a 'bourgeois' from those 'far western parts' beyond the radius of Puttenham's courtly circle. Attempts to find traces of Shakespeare's Warwickshire origin in his language have proved inconclusive. Shakespeare in London shows no sign of surviving local patriotism. When he

has occasion to use dialect in his plays (as in the Tom o' Bedlam scenes in *King Lear*) he is content with the conventional stage 'southern'. A number of dialect words (some of them traceable to Warwickshire) have been collected from his works, but the contexts in which they occur (notably the Witches' scenes in *Macbeth*) have mostly the effect of detaching the poet from them. For the accents of his workaday speech we have no evidence at all. As an actor he had to speak as was required of him. It is not possible to imagine him inflexible of mind or insensitive of ear. Though he had served no boyhood apprenticeship to the stage, he must have acquired the tones and delivery which would make his speech current with City and Court.

Of the language of the accepted body of Shakespeare's work as preserved in 'good' Quartos and the Folio it is possible to speak more positively. It is based on Elizabethan speech at its best. The popular side of Shakespeare's art has been so much stressed in recent years that it may seem startling thus to claim, in effect, courtly affinities for his language. Shakespeare possessed, however, genius, professional flexibility and noble patrons; he belonged to a Company which, like other companies and more so, was a link between City and Court. It had to keep in its repertory plays suitable for production at Court at short notice and to provide actors proficient enough to avoid disgrace before an audience not only critical but brutally frank. This quality of courtly audiences was so much in Shakespeare's mind during the first part of his career that we can be sure he had learnt his lesson or watched others learning theirs. Few people can witness the last act of *Love's Labour's Lost* without wishing for the Nine Worthies, however o'er-parted, a more friendly and patient hearing. Athens has a kindlier atmosphere than Navarre, but in the final scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the joking comments of the 'polite' audience are not 'asides' conventionally inaudible to the victims; they are heard and sometimes replied to. In both these cases the poet, as professional, is acquiescing genially in the fun poked at amateur performances. When the professional players come to Elsinore they meet, in private, a courteous but discriminating host; in public, however,

Hamlet, pursuing his antic disposition, assimilates his manners to those of the young blood of the Court: 'pox, leave thy damnable faces, and begin'.<sup>1</sup>

### ELIZABETHAN TASTES, STANDARDS AND TRAINING IN LANGUAGE. INFLUENCES ON LANGUAGE, ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC

The tendency to standardisation must not be over-stressed. Richard Carew,<sup>2</sup> writing about 1596, glories in the diversity of dialects ('all right Englishe') as evidence of the 'copiousnesse' of the language, and in recent times it has been declared: 'In the rankness and wildness of the language he [Shakespeare] found his opportunity'.<sup>3</sup> Though ideas of 'true' pronunciation, orthography and usage were beginning to occupy men's minds, the analogies of modern 'Received Standard' (as vouched for by the B.B.C.) and 'Public School English' are misleading. Those who were helping to build up the courtly standard were less obsessed than we are by 'correctness' and uniformity in spelling or pronunciation, by 'accent' and all that it connotes to-day. They had other tests as well for a man's quality or breeding as expressed in language. The features that impressed them most were (in words culled from their own vocabulary): 'copie', 'sentence', 'pressness', loftiness of 'conceit', 'mellifluousness', 'readiness', 'fullness' of illustration and allusion.

They thought of this language as acquired, not taught. Here we touch an important difference between that age and ours. Neither schoolmaster nor don had as yet done his best or worst upon the language. The schools at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign were the depleted heritage of the Middle Ages, when all ecclesiastical institutions from the large and highly organised monastery to the single chantry-priest had held a potential connexion with education. Since the services of the Church were in Latin, since the bulk of religious and serious literature was in

<sup>1</sup> *Hamlet*, Act III, Sc. ii, ll. 266-7.

<sup>2</sup> *The Excellency of the English Tongue*, printed 1614; see Gregory Smith, *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, II, 292.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. G. S. Gordon, *Shakespeare's English*, S.P.E. Tracts, No. 29, 1928.

Latin and even business records were sometimes kept in the same language, this ecclesiastical education had been almost entirely in and for Latin. That the Reformation, substituting an English prayer-book and English Bible, did not bring about an educational revolution is due to the coincident 'Revival of Learning', to the hereditary and international prestige of Latin and to conservative inertia. Only the acuter minds like Mulcaster, Spenser's master at Merchant Taylors', saw or admitted that the chief grounds for the complete Latinisation of education had been swept away.

In later Tudor times, apart from the choir schools which existed to train choristers for the Cathedrals and Royal Chapels, there were two main classes of schools—the Pettie schools for little children (Fr. *petit*) and the Grammar schools. These last concerned themselves (in theory) solely with Latin grammar and a varying amount of Greek. They resented having to waste time and talent in teaching English reading and writing to make up for widespread deficiencies in the 'Elementarie' course. Only in this last did any study of the mother tongue find a place. The inadequacy of the English basis appears incredible to us; in the Pettie school the child was expected to learn to read and write English, to begin to spell out Latin, to get some practice with figures and to be grounded in the principles of the Christian religion. This narrow curriculum was still further straitened by ignorant teaching with the help of horn-books, ABC's and Primers. ABC's consisting of the alphabet, some simple words, and the Lord's Prayer or Catechism were sold for one penny. This and some Psalms or verses made the bulk of the child's 'reading', which he thus economically combined with his religious instruction. The more scholarly the Grammar school to which he proceeded, the more 'Humanist' the master, the less attention did he pay to his mother tongue from that time forth, and the more was he encouraged, not only to write, but to think in Latin, and to find in 'the Ancients' a complete code for the ordering of life, literature and language.

Education must have been, moreover, especially in mid-Tudor times, deficient in quantity as well as quality. As a result of the

destruction of the old institutions, the engrossing of Church lands, and the transference of many refounded schools from a land endowment to a money endowment (with consequent depreciation), there was for a period a sort of school famine. The mediæval world had always thought of education as a free gift of the Church to those who could profit by it, and this, in secular terms, remained the Tudor conception. In the absence of a capitalist notion of money-making schools, it was necessary to found and endow them. The lead given by the King Edward VI Grammar schools was followed up by the Queen Elizabeth Grammar schools and the Guild schools such as Merchant Taylors' and the Stratford Grammar School itself. The earlier school famine led to a high proportion of illiteracy in older people at the time of Shakespeare's coming to London; moreover, the entanglement of education with the results of the economic revolution (which was one consequence of the Reformation) and the absorption of vigorous minds in ecclesiastical polemic were prime causes of a Philistine bleakness in the pre-Armada period which is as clearly reflected in the literary language as in any other field. Except when the lilt of a tune enfranchises mind and ear, the diction, the rhymes and rhythms of the mid-century poets between the *Songs and Sonnets* (1557) and *The Shepheards Calender* (1579) are meagre and obvious. Barnabe Googe, author of *Eglogs, Epytaphes and Sonettes* (1563), will provide a representative specimen of the sort of language that could earn a man a reputation in those days:

Whan thou doste hym forget I wysch,  
all mischifes on the lyght,  
And after death, the Fendes of Hell,  
torment thy lyuyng spryght.<sup>1</sup>

Even the swashbuckling Gascoigne rarely, if ever, escapes from the contemporary blight:

And thereupon I have presumed yet,  
To take in hande this Poeme now begonne:  
Wherin I meane to tell what race they ronne,

<sup>1</sup> *Egloga Septima.*

Who followe Drummes before they knowe the dubbe,  
And brag of *Mars* before they feele his clubbe.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear that a new spirit was wanted and poets of a very different breed, whom this unschooled and little-considered language should call to adventure and experiment.

The concentration in Public and Grammar schools on the *literae humaniores* of Latin and Greek long out-lasting the so-called Revival of Learning. The English language has not been very long directly under the ferrule of the schoolmaster. Indirectly, however, it has been subjected to a continual pressure from the classical languages (particularly Latin), and this pressure was already being exerted in Shakespeare's youth. Of this Shakespeare shows himself well aware through Holofernes, whose absurdities will, if carefully studied, be found to provide pointers to all its most important results. In himself both product and active supporter of the Tudor school system, Holofernes not only thinks in grammar but in the Latin order: 'A soul feminine saluteth us'.<sup>2</sup> This reminds us that there was a danger to the language in Renaissance times which had not threatened during the Middle Ages. Then—though the familiar use of Latin led to embellishing vernacular composition with all sorts of schemes, tropes and allusions drawn from classical and pseudo-classical writers—Latin itself had been used as a living language, and the actual structure and substance of the native language had been safe. At the Renaissance rhetoric replaced logic as the principal subject of study at the universities, and 'style' became an end in itself. There were scholars in Italy who could not sleep o' nights if they had lapsed from pure Cicconianism during the day. The doctrine of Imitation as expounded by Ascham (an English Cicconian) in the *Scholemaster* (1570) led inevitably from the Latin imitation of Greek to the English imitation of Latin, and the pedants soon began to busy themselves with the task of making the native language less native. A series of 'Orthoepists', among them Ascham's friend Sir Thomas Smith, set themselves to 'reform' English pronunciation and orthography.

<sup>1</sup> Gascoigne, *Posies*, 1575; *Dulce bellum inexpertis*.

<sup>2</sup> *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act IV, Sc. ii, l. 75.

Spelling reform must have been sufficiently prominent to make it worth while to raise a laugh at it in *Love's Labour's Lost*; that the reformer is Holofernes leaves us in no doubt as to Shakespeare's standpoint. Holofernes' 'abominable'<sup>1</sup> has indeed long since been laughed out of court, but his *debt* (replacing *dette*) has secured a partial victory (we write it but do not say it), while of other inventions and pedantic corrections made by his tribe (such as *perfect* for *parfit*, *adventure* for *auntyr* and *aventure*) the triumph is complete.

Syntax, sentence structure and vocabulary offered equally accessible fields for interference. A process of Latinisation set in which reached its climax in the seventeenth century with Sir Thomas Browne in prose and Milton in verse. On the whole Elizabethan verse resists invasion better than the prose, and Shakespeare's mature verse-sentences, even when (as they often are) complex, have, unlike Chapman's in his *Iliad* and Milton's in *Paradise Lost*, an individual and native complexity. All the figures of classical rhetoric were becoming yearly more popularised by the publication of useful text-books in the vernacular applying to the adornment of written and spoken English all the devices of Tully's eloquence and the rules and examples of Quintilian. The influence of this rhetoric is omnipresent in more studied Elizabethan work. It makes a very large part, according to Puttenham, of the Art of English poesy. He devotes eleven chapters of Book III of the *Arte* to a delighted exposition of the 'figures'. Though they are minutely distinguished and classified, the bulk of them (and all that were commonly used) resolve themselves into variations of two principles—balance (including antithesis) and repetition. They thus naturally exert a potent influence on the shape and design of English sentences. These figures are pervasive in Spenser and rife in the drama of the University Wits. They were thus a part of Shakespeare's heritage, as can be seen in early plays like *Richard II* and *King John*. Not only figures but ornate and pedantic words were disseminated by the arts of rhetoric. Puttenham's amusing and sometimes delightful Englishings of the Greek terms (rendering,

<sup>1</sup> *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act v, Sc. i, l. 23.



for example, *Epizeuxis* by 'Underlay or Cooockoo-spel') were a spirited attempt to resist undue classical invasion of the vocabulary. The books of rhetoric were perhaps the most prolific sources of the much-decried Inkhorn terms, many of which, however, usefully filled gaps and soon ceased to be mere 'terms of Art'. Holofernes here once more appropriately enters the field with his 'insinuation, as it were *in via*, in way of explication'.<sup>1</sup> *Insinuate* was (though not exclusively) a technical rhetorician's word.

There was another respect in which the early Elizabethan language was, as compared with the literary language of to-day, unschooled. Far more pervasive than any pedagogical influence is tradition. In the mid-sixteenth century many of the links with the past had broken or worn thin. Phonetic change had rendered Chaucer's technique (as distinct from his spirit and narrative power) incapable of appreciation. Mediaeval prose had been far less developed than the verse and could offer the Elizabethans little guidance. The change of faith, the spread of 'Humanism' and new tendencies in social life, all tended to cut the Elizabethan off from his English past. He was taught far more about the classical past than his own. The result was a certain impoverishment of language (again in the mid-Tudor period) as well as one-sidedness of culture and imagination.

The position of the Tuscan language in the period of Ariosto offers an illuminating contrast. It was overshadowed by the cult of pure Latinity, but it enjoyed an unbroken literary tradition stretching back through Boccaccio and Petrarch to Dante. A poet who took it up knew where he was in it; he had masters to whom to turn. The Elizabethans, though they acknowledged the rights of custom, had no comparable support in their own language. There was a phase of uncertainty, even timidity. Most of the better-known sixteenth-century writers were men of stout heart who refused to be daunted, but their words often betray an atmosphere of doubt all round them. Ascham asserts that it would have been, not only more creditable, but *easier*, to have written his *Toxophilus* (1545) in Latin (for there would

<sup>1</sup> *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act IV, Sc. ii, l. 13.

then have been a model to imitate). Sidney, in his *Apologie*, finds it necessary to rally to the defence of the language against two current accusations: that it is a 'mingled' (i.e. impure) language and that 'it wanteth grammar'. Mulcaster in his *Elementarie* (1580) makes the matter very plain. He refers in detail (though not by name) to contemporary writers who find various causes of complaint with English: it is not 'certain', and therefore makes an unstable foundation for any composition, it is impossible to know how to spell it (Mulcaster deals thoroughly with that), it has not been subdued by 'Art', it carries no credit, and it is a waste of time to write 'anic philosophicall argument' in it because the 'vnlearned vnderstand it not, the learned esteeme it not'. All this Mulcaster triumphantly refutes.

The critical movements, too, of the same period from Ascham to Mulcaster could only have perpetuated this diffident and chilly spirit had the later writers given way to them. One of these movements—the attempt to impose classical metres on English verse—proceeded by forcing English words and syllables into alien moulds with a complete disregard of native speech habits and would, if successful, have cut English poetic speech off from its roots. The crusade against the importation of foreign words (which emanated from the same Cambridge circle led by Sir John Cheke and Ascham) has something more to be said for it, but it was singularly ill-timed. The language needed enrichment, not curtailment. The drab 'Saxon' colouring given to the poems of Googe and Gascoigne by the prevalence of words like *brats*, *trudge*, *trot*, *doleful dumps* and *carking care* shows that a poet of singular tact as well as conviction was required to recover for the literary language the lost treasures of Chaucer's English.

Spenser had been through Mulcaster's hands and doubtless absorbed from his beatings some additional courage and enterprise, though he does not elect to follow Mulcaster's modernising way. Coming immediately after the mid-century poets and recognising the 'winter-starved' condition of the language he turned to the native past for new linguistic material as well as for subject-matter. From the emergence of Spenser onwards a new spirit begins to manifest itself. A gathering of energy and confidence

is one of the most striking features of the years 1580-96. It shows itself in every department of life, art and thought, and is expressed in language with even less hesitation than elsewhere. Shakespeare, younger than Spenser by some dozen years, was born free of the inhibitions of the mid-century. Acquisition was now in the air; there was a buccaneering spirit abroad in language as well as on the high seas. The part of Shakespeare as language-maker has naturally been more closely studied than that of any other Elizabethan author. Our debt to him in new words, new adaptations, new phrases, which by their vividness of metaphor or aptness and pregnancy of gnomic expression have become current coin, has been assessed and estimated again and again, and the tale is not yet told. But the making of language was going on all around him. It has been calculated that Chapman actually invented more new words than Shakespeare, though they have never come home to men's business and bosoms in the same way. Among the prose writers, Nashe excellently corroborates and endorses the work of the poets. He glories in language; no word, learned or popular, comes amiss provided it be vigorous and expressive. He grows impatient with the 'Saxon' monosyllabic small change of which the native part of our language so largely consists and takes no small credit to himself for acclimatising a new brand of foreign word—'Italianate' long verbs in *-ise*. The nature and quality of this late-Elizabethan achievement cannot be appreciated apart from the whole Tudor evolution in language of which it forms the second great phase. It is the thaw succeeding the frost. Though mid-Tudor barriers were now everywhere overflowed they were not entirely swept away. During the period 'of long-choosing and beginning late' English literary criticism was born. The educated Englishman became critically and linguistically self-conscious; he acquired standards and power of comparison. He was compelled to consider England's place in the Republic of Letters. In the phase of expansion, fine words, racy phrases, exuberant sentences appealed not only through novelty and contrast, but also as ammunition; it was as patriot that the Elizabethan developed his linguistic sense.

Shakespeare's plays not only harvest the linguistic wealth of this period of expansion, but reveal also, especially the comedies, a linguistic consciousness. This prompts the speculation whether it is possible to trace among the late Elizabethans, as well as a rich sense of language, some unacademic factors at work, reaching even the more or less illiterate and uniting them in a common interest. One such factor must have been the widely diffused love of music, especially of singing. John Dowland's and other song-books demonstrate a capacity for lyrical composition far outside the ranks of identifiable poets, and in addition there was the whole body of genuinely popular folk-song and ballad. Any one who had by heart half-a-dozen representative songs had the root of the matter in him; he had a touchstone by which to gauge poetic rhythm and speech. But, above all, the Elizabethan had to be a good listener; the more illiterate he was, the more he was forced to train his ear. There was little cheap print, and even the broadside was useless to the man who could not read. He absorbed the grisly details of the latest murder or the progress of some popular agitation from the lips of someone better informed or more imaginative than himself. There must have been much derangement of epitaphs among the Dogberry and Dame Quickly class in town and country. It is the inevitable result of hearing long words and never seeing them. Malapropism in characters like Dogberry and the clown or yokel in *Love's Labour's Lost* is not a mere stage trick; it rests upon a difference in literacy between those days and these. The eager manner in which words were picked up shows the same acquisitiveness in the clowns as in their betters. Though they lived mainly upon the almsbasket of other people's words, if they found themselves at a feast of languages they stole the scraps:

Remuneration! O, that's the Latin word for three farthings... why, it is a fairer name than French crown. I will never buy and sell out of this word.<sup>1</sup>

Punning and verbal acrobatics show the same eager attention to words on the part of all classes. According to Feste one of the functions of high-class clowning was the corruption of words—

<sup>1</sup> *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act III, Sc. i, ll. 130-5.

*i.e.* the audacious or humorous abuse of them—and the turning of sentences inside-out like ‘cheveril gloves’. The trained jester had to keep his society jargon up-to-date and to know when *welkin* came in and *element* went out. He had to be ready with every sort of quip or quibble. In the theatres, too, the same sort of verbal wit passed current; otherwise dramatists would hardly have toiled so\*painfully at

... a practice

As full of labour as a wise man’s art.<sup>1</sup>

People loved, then, to follow words; they were also trained to listen strenuously. There is no comparison between their listening and our short-sighted ‘listening-in’. Large numbers stood in the open air for two hours or more listening in the theatres; they also stood listening to sermons at Paul’s Cross and elsewhere; if they sat, they sat on stools or hard benches in unheated churches while coughing drowned the parson’s saw. In many schools and homes young people were required to recapitulate on Monday Sunday’s discourse. A conscientious and eloquent preacher would expect to hold his congregation for an hour. There were homely preachers like Latimer in mid-Tudor times, whose successors were the Puritan orators of the Martin Marprelate period, in whom militant earnestness was valued more than learning. At the other end of the scale was a courtly, scholarly divine like Lancelot Andrewes. Even Latimer makes more demands upon his hearers than do preachers at the present day. Modern university lectures, though delivered to presumably trained audiences, offer more concessions to the frailty of easily-dulled minds than does the sermon of any sixteenth-century preacher of standing. The sermons of Henry Smith, a moderate Puritan who became minister of St Clement Danes’ in 1587, provide excellent examples of preaching for the plain man, undertaken at first with no thought of literary form. There are extant numerous ‘pirated’ examples of Smith’s preaching, compiled from notes taken during delivery, and representing approximately, therefore, the sermons as they reached the listener. Smith uses a natural, middle diction, with plenty

<sup>1</sup> *Twelfth Night*, Act III, Sc. II, 69-70.

of homely, striking illustration, but the style is never as 'open', the connexions are never as easy as would be those of a modern speaker appealing to an audience of 'tired business men'. It requires a little imagination when reading at leisure and in comfort to gauge the effect upon ear and attention of the more intricate and sustained passages, such as this sentence from the sermon on 'The Restitution of Nabuchadnezzar':<sup>1</sup>

As Daniel noted the time of his pride, when he walked in his pallace, to shewe howe pride growes out of buildings, and wealth, and apparel, and such rootes: so he noteth the time of his fall, while the words were in his mouth, to shewe that he was punished for his pride and ignorance, that he might know where to begin his conuersion, and abate his pride, and when he had taken away the cause, then God would take away the punishment, so likewise he noteth the time of his restitution, *At the ende of these dayes*, that is, after seuen yeares were expired; to shewe how long the sicknesse of pride is in curing, and to shewe how euerie thing was fulfilled which was prophesied, euen to the poynt of time, for it was tolde him by Daniel that he should be like a beast seuen yeares, therefore Nabuchadnezzar is prompt as it were to confesse the trueth, and saith as the prophet sayth *At the ende of these dayes*, that is, at the ende of seuen yeares, I Nabuchadnezzar was restored to my Kingdome. . . .

Educated Elizabethans, as well, must have retained attentive listening habits, and, if they had any gift of expression, a corresponding range and dignity in speech. Books were restricted in their circulation and were only gradually becoming *pastime*. Newspapers as drugs, and barricades between man and man, had not been invented. There was more reading aloud, especially to women as they worked. A great man's table was expected to be a conversational feast; children were sent to be 'educated' in great houses by keeping their ears open while they made themselves useful. Elizabethan lighting must have restricted evening employments at home and out-of-doors. The eye must have been compelled to rest while the ear and tongue were busy. Lyly is not a realist, but in *Euphues and his England* (1580) he is

<sup>1</sup> *The Sermons of Master Henrie Smith, gathered into one volume*, 1592. The pirated versions, though differing in numerous details from the above and from each other, offer on the whole a remarkable tribute to accuracy of oral attention.

undoubtedly describing a phase of courtly sophisticated life which fascinated him. The dinner-time symposia, the capping of stories, the fireside debates, are not in their high-flown, over-disciplined euphuism transcripts from life, but they are based upon a contemporary zest for extempore expatiation on topics of love and sentiment which was fostered by the growth of a new convention of *amour courtois* at Court. To the interest and importance of this as a novelty Lyly refers again and again.

### THE AUDIENCE

Shakespeare could count, then, on an audience of good listeners. It was an audience, too, far more ready than we are to think of speech as an art, to accept conventions, and quick to note and appreciate distinctions and changes of key, for all family and social life was more strictly governed by these than now. There was more difference between the modes of address reserved for one's superiors and one's inferiors, between the tones and phrases used to the old and the young. Sir Toby Belch, who, though he may find congenial company below-stairs, is a man of spirit and knows the ways of his world, advises Sir Andrew in composing his challenge to 'thou' his opponent some thrice;<sup>1</sup> such a use of the familiar form by a comparative stranger would constitute an unforgivable insult. In *Lear* there is something peculiarly horrible in the manner in which Goneril and Regan preserve hollow forms of filial respect:

O Sir, you are old. . . .

If we can judge from the long stage-history of a genuinely popular piece like the *Spanish Tragedy*, the audience was more ready to stretch mind and ear than now. It relished the sweep from epic *tirade* to euphuistic lovers' debate, or from:

O eyes! no eyes, but fountains fraught with tears;  
O life! no life, but lively form of death

<sup>1</sup> *Twelfth Night*, Act III, Sc. ii, l. 46.

to the macabre prose dialogue between the hangman and Pedringano:

Ay, truly; come, are you ready? I pray, sir, despatch; the day grows away.

What, do you hang by the hour?...

There was far less distrust of fine language and direct appeal to the emotions. Now the word *rhetorical*, like the word *artificial*, has acquired a pejorative meaning. The Elizabethan was afraid of neither. The modern dramatist or novelist who subscribes to the canons of 'realism' strives by broken sentences, reproduction of clichés, current colloquialisms and even by devices of punctuation such as dots and dashes, to represent the short-breathed incoherencies of an age grown careless of speech. The Elizabethan could savour the quality of 'language such as men do use', but he also expected the dramatist to recall by his diction the divinity that hedged a king and to do his duty by all the great common-places—Death the Skeleton and Time the Shadow. The actor expected it likewise and would have thought poorly of a play which offered no such opportunities for the display of virtuosity as: 'Have at you then, affection's men-at-arms', 'All the World's a stage', 'Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness'.

It is no derogation to the reputation of Shakespeare to point out that he turned dramatist at (linguistically as well as otherwise) a singularly fortunate time. Ten years earlier or ten years later would have made significant differences. The interaction of his early work and that of the University Wits and the changes in his latest plays which have been ascribed to the influence of Beaumont and Fletcher, preclude us from claiming that he would or could have remained Olympically unmoved by the *Zeitgeist*. Shakespeare grew to maturity under Elizabeth, and catered for an Elizabethan Court and an Elizabethan City. Pedant and Puritan were as yet kept in their place—the latter with increasing difficulty. Elizabeth herself made a royal and penetrating use of language and had the same tastes in style and jokes as her full-blooded citizens. Under her the genius of the



language could combine a centralising, stabilising tendency with individual liberty. Excellence was admired, the right and the wrong were debated, but there was no worship of uniformity—except in church-going. The Court of James was to prove no substitute for the Court of Elizabeth, and, owing to far-reaching religious, social and political changes, the Jacobean audience was to prove a far less catholic collaborator in language.

Shakespeare exercised a unique power over language; at the same time his 'normality' can be most definitely and concretely illustrated from this field. He had an instinct for the heart or centre of language. There is comparatively little in his works of the more ephemeral, though vigorous, Elizabethan linguistic activities. Though, as in *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Henry IV* and *Twelfth Night*, he enjoyed a laugh at learned, fashionable or popular affectations, he was unwilling to waste much energy on any form of speech which lay far from the sufficiently abundant Elizabethan core. He prefers to *suggest*, rather than *reproduce*, the speech of those classes or individuals who were, linguistically, on the fringe. He allows rustics, for example, to reveal themselves by homely phrases, vain repetitions, simplicity of ideas and connexions, rather than by set rusticisms or dialect,<sup>1</sup> and he makes a temperate use of the canting phrases, thieves' jargon and out-of-the-way professional terms so robustly exploited by the conny-catchers, and judiciously used by Ben Jonson to buttress his careful realism. He exercised his boldness and felicity not, of course, on a language which was actually used by all classes in his audience, but on one for which all had an affinity once he had illumined it to their imaginations.

From this Shakespeare drew his potency as a language-maker. His words went home. At the same time he kept the most flexible speech ever used by Englishmen linked to great issues and bathed in the light and shadow of imagination. He was the master of

... the multitudinous seas incarnadine

a--

Pray you, undo this button.

<sup>1</sup> For Shakespeare's use of dialect, see above, p. 121.

While his plays remain the common study of English people he will, it can be hoped, continue to exercise a centripetal, unifying influence on language. As a 'tradition' he will prevent our speech from suffering from a repetition of the mid-Tudor rootlessness. He keeps a certain amount of vivid Elizabethan word and phrase in popular circulation to-day. In his mature plays he kept the dramatic and the poetic together, just as he kept together king and clown. At the least, he may be expected to exert a certain pull against the narrower interpretations of 'realism'; in language, as in action and character, the reputation of Shakespeare, especially when compared with that of Ben Jonson, has shown that what counts after a hundred years or so is life and power, not a day-to-day verisimilitude.

# SHAKESPEARE AND MUSIC

BY

EDWARD J. DENT

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THE age of Shakespeare was one in which music, both in England and in other countries, reached an extraordinarily high artistic level. Not merely is it an age of great composers all over Europe, but it is an age in which music was widely cultivated and appreciated. In mediaeval days music had been centred mainly in the courts of princes, in the cathedrals and the monasteries. Outside these environments domestic life had been neither secure nor comfortable enough to permit of any serious and continuous cultivation of the art by ordinary people. The English, it is true, had always been a music-loving nation since the twelfth century, if not before; but in days when no music was printed and comparatively little written down, musical education apart from professional circles (in which we can include both the wandering minstrels and the church musicians) must have been very irregular. During the whole of the fifteenth century there was a very large production of ecclesiastical music, but our records of secular music during that period are of the scantiest. Church music was written down and preserved for regular use; secular music, composed for the entertainment of people who had few books and comparatively little occasion for either reading or writing, was learned largely by ear. There was no reason to preserve it in writing; when audiences were tired of one song or dance musicians were always ready to provide new ones. Church music was required for regularly recurring ceremonies; secular

music, whether courtly or popular, served the needs of the moment.

With the beginning of the Renaissance and the simultaneous invention of printing, musical culture spread to much wider circles. At the various Courts there was more occasion for secular ceremonial, and in lower social circles life became generally more leisured and cultivated, so that there was much more opportunity for the domestic practice of music. Music had been printed as early as 1465; but the real beginning of music printing and publishing as an industry dates from 1501, when Petrucci started printing music at Venice. The printing of secular music in England began with Wynkyn de Worde in 1530. In Castiglione's famous book *The Courtier*, first translated into English in 1561, there is much discourse of music, and it is considered to be an indispensable accomplishment for a gentleman. In early mediaeval days it had been regarded as disgraceful and effeminate except for those trained for the priesthood; but in Castiglione's book a gentleman who takes this view is very sharply reprimanded by the lady who is the supreme authority on good breeding. Italy set the example to all the Courts of Europe, and the English Court, from the time of Henry VIII to that of Elizabeth, took an active interest in music. Henry VIII was himself a composer; Edward VI played the lute well, and his sisters Mary and Elizabeth were both accomplished performers on the virginals.

The English have always been singers rather than instrumentalists, and at all periods vocal music has been England's chief contribution to the art. Wynkyn de Worde's first musical publication, apart from ecclesiastical music, was a book of songs. The word *song* in those days generally signified vocal part-music rather than songs for a single voice with instrumental accompaniment; but although most of the secular vocal music of the sixteenth century has survived in the form of part-music we have abundant evidence to show that this music was very often performed in actual practice by one voice with instruments.

The favourite type of vocal music in the sixteenth century is often said to have been the madrigal, and that word is often

used very loosely to describe all sorts of vocal part-music. Strictly speaking the madrigal is an Italian form cultivated in Italy throughout the century, but mainly in the first half of it. The leaders of music from about 1450 to 1550 were the Netherlanders, and Italy in those days was overrun with Netherlandish musicians who were employed at the Italian Courts. The Italian madrigal was the joint product of Netherlandish music and Italian poetry. England naturally maintained a close connexion with the Netherlands, and it was indeed from England that the Netherlanders had learned their musical style in the fifteenth century, a style which in the fourteenth century seems to have arisen from contact between England and Italy. During the first half of the sixteenth century England possessed a flourishing school of its own, closely allied to that of the Netherlands, but characteristically English and showing no signs of Italian musical influence. Italian music did not reach England until at least half-way through the century, and its influence was not markedly felt until after the publication of *Musica Transalpina*, a collection of Italian madrigals with English words, in 1588. It is from this date that the great school of English madrigal composers begins, going on into the reign of James I.

The Italian madrigal, especially in these later years, was cultivated mainly at the small Courts, where professional singers and instrumentalists were engaged. In England the madrigal was much more performed in amateur circles, especially in the houses of the great families, whether in London or in the country. Many English composers were regularly employed as domestic music-masters in great houses, as for example Wilbye at Hengrave Hall. If Morley is to be believed, it was the usual custom to hand round part-books after supper for family singing, and when any unfortunate guest was unable to sing his part at sight he was considered unfit for polite society. One may suspect, however, that Morley may have been guilty of some slight exaggeration; it would naturally be to his interest as a professional musician to put the case for the urgency of musical education as vigorously as possible. There is at the same time considerable evidence to show that instrumental music, especi-

ally for viols and recorders, was very generally cultivated by amateurs. The lute was the most popular instrument of the time, along with various other instruments of similar type. It has often been asserted that the lute was an exceedingly difficult instrument to play; but the same thing may be said to-day of the pianoforte, if the attainments of a Liszt or a Busoni are taken as the normal standard. There certainly were, in Shakespeare's days and later, lute-players of exceptional virtuosity; but one may safely suppose that most Elizabethans played the lute no better than the average amateur plays the pianoforte now. It was always in demand for dance music and for simple accompaniments, and 'vamping' was probably even commoner then than it is in our own day.

There was a simplified form of lute called the cittern, which had only four strings, and was easy to play; its widespread popularity is shown by the fact that it was to be found in every barber's shop for customers to amuse themselves with while waiting to be shaved.<sup>1</sup> The virginal was also sometimes to be seen at the barber's, and this fact gives us a characteristic view of the general enthusiasm for music in Elizabethan England. The love of music was certainly not confined to the educated classes, although these naturally pursued a higher standard of knowledge and performance. Apart from the musicians employed by the Court and by official bodies such as municipal corporations there were innumerable performers of a lower class who picked up a living as best they could. They were to be seen wandering about the streets waiting for casual engagements to play at weddings or other festivities; they played for the entertainment of people in taverns and in houses of ill fame. Like the actors, they were legally regarded as rogues and vagabonds if they were not definitely in the service of some prince or nobleman, but this did not diminish their general popularity.

This last seems to be the music which County Paris brings to his wedding with Juliet, and it is *not* the music which a great nobleman would have already at his command. Here, then, whether by error or design, Shakespeare is writing in terms of

<sup>1</sup> See Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* and *Epicoene*.

another social class; and, indeed, Capulet's household throughout has been more a burgess's than a nobleman's.<sup>1</sup> The names of Simon Catling, Hugh Rebeck and James Soundpost suggest that they were players of stringed instruments, but as one of them says:

Faith, we may put up our pipes and be gone,

it is clear that they enter playing on wind instruments, either shawms or recorders, and these too would sound more effective than strings when played behind the scenes.

Compare this with the Count Orsino's music in *Twelfth Night*; a very different business and, dramatically, far more correct. He has his musicians in permanent attendance, to play when he will. And almost certainly these are stringed instruments, for they accompany not only a song, but very quiet speech.

Not more than a summary account can be given here of the various instruments played in Elizabethan England. The flute in general use was not the modern cross-blown flute (called in the eighteenth century the German flute) but the recorder, blown from the end like the flageolet or penny whistle, which are merely varieties of the same instrument. The recorder was made in several sizes, treble, tenor and bass, and used for music in parts. Its tone was sweet and melancholy. The fife was used for military purposes, and the pipe (a small flageolet) used with the tabor (a small drum) for country dancing.

Feste, the clown in *Twelfth Night*, plays the pipe and tabor in combination; something of a step dance being included too. This asked for a good deal of skill,<sup>2</sup> and Ariel in *The Tempest* is directed to play a tune on the tabor and pipe. Folk dancers of to-day will be perfectly familiar with the pipe and tabor played by one man simultaneously.

The hautboy was the universal reed instrument. Its tone was more shrill and harsh than that of the hautboy used in modern

<sup>1</sup> See p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> There is extant a portrait of Richard Tarlton playing on pipe and tabor and one of William Kempe dancing a Morris from London to Norwich, while a man walks beside him playing a pipe and tabor too. Both Tarlton and Kempe were actors in Shakespeare's company.

orchestras. The hautboy, like the recorder, was made in several sizes; its bass variety is the bassoon. Hautboys were also called shawms or waits. The word *wait* originally signified a sentinel or watchman who gave signals by blowing a horn; early in the fifteenth century it was applied to municipal watchmen who were also employed as musicians; later the word came to be applied both to their instruments (shawms or hautboys) and sometimes to the pieces of music played on them.

Horns were used only for hunting music. They are employed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when Theseus bids the huntsmen wake the sleeping lovers with their horns. The instrument called a cornet was not the modern cornet-à-piston, but an instrument (now quite obsolete) with a cupped mouthpiece, blown like a horn or trumpet. It was generally made of wood covered with leather; it had finger-holes, so that it could play a chromatic scale, which the horn and trumpet could not. The cornet was also made in various sizes; its bass is the serpent, which survived well into the nineteenth century. The tone of the cornet was something like that of a trumpet, but softer; and in the 'private' or indoor theatres it seems—probably for this reason—to have replaced the louder instrument.<sup>1</sup>

The trumpet was pre-eminently a military instrument, and therefore traditionally associated with royalty. In Germany trumpeters were regarded as the aristocrats of the musical profession. They enjoyed certain social privileges, and the music of trumpets at weddings and so forth was forbidden to be employed by persons under a certain rank of nobility. Trumpeters do not seem to have been such important personages in England, but the instrument none the less stood apart from the others as expressive of special dignity. Trumpets were almost always associated with drums.

The sackbut or trombone, on the other hand, was more associated with religious ceremonies. Cornets and sackbuts were often used in English cathedrals and churches to support the organs, which were weak and small as compared to ours, or indeed to replace them altogether. The sackbuts were not

<sup>1</sup> See W. J. Lawrence, *Shakespeare's Workshop*, 1928, p. 48.



exclusively reserved for church music, but they were always employed for music of solemn and ceremonial character.

Of stringed instruments played with the bow the viols were the most important. The earlier mediaeval rebec was almost obsolete in Shakespeare's day (but we find an indirect allusion to it in the name—Hugh Rebeck—of one of the musicians in *Romeo and Juliet*). The more modern violin had been introduced from Italy in Henry VIII's reign, and enjoyed the patronage of royalty, but none the less it was considered in cultured circles to be a coarse and aggressive instrument suited only to country folk.<sup>1</sup> Viols, like recorders, were made in various sizes. A 'chest of viols' generally consisted of two trebles, two tenors and two basses. The viol had a flat back and six strings; its tone was soft and reedy.

In *Pericles* it is to the sound of viols that Thaisa is brought back to consciousness after the shipwreck.

The rough and woeful music that we have,  
Cause it to sound, beseech you;  
The viol once more....

We may presume their use, too, for the music which stirs the statue of Hermione, and for that to which King Lear wakes to sanity.

Any gentleman of education might be expected to play upon the viol—upon the viol-da-gamba, at least. Though we do not see him put to the test, Sir Toby Belch boasts that Sir Andrew Aguecheek

...plays o' the viol de gamboys.

In Jonson's *Every Man out of His Humour* the actor of Sir Fastidious Brisk is positively called upon to play one.

The lute and cittern have already been mentioned. There

<sup>1</sup> The use of the violin in Tudor times has been disputed by Mr Jeffrey Pulver (*Dictionary of Old English Music*, London, 1923), who maintains that the words *violin* and *violon* in English documents of the sixteenth century can only refer to treble and tenor viols. Mr Pulver holds that the violin was not much known in England before 1638, when Charles I paid £12 for a Cremona violin. If violins cost so much as that they were hardly likely to have been used by country fiddlers as Anthony Wood says they were. It may be noted that the word *violin* does not occur in Shakespeare.

were other varieties of the lute, but they cannot be described here.

Upon one sort of lute or another a dramatist could be sure that some of the actors—of the boy actors in particular—would be reasonably skilled. Ophelia (by a stage direction in the First Quarto of *Hamlet*) enters, *playing on a lute*; and in *Henry VIII* the Queen tells her waiting-woman

Take thy lute, wench: my soul grows sad with troubles;  
Sing and disperse 'em, if thou canst: leave working

—which is the signal for the singing of

Orpheus with his lute made trees. . . .<sup>1</sup>

And, in *Julius Caesar*, the 'instrument' over which Lucius playing a 'sleepy tune' falls asleep, is pretty certainly a lute. Brutus takes it from his lap, saying:

If thou dost nod, thou break'st thy instrument.

The virginal, an ancestor of the pianoforte, in which, however, the strings were not struck by hammers but plucked by quills actuated by a keyboard, was played mainly by ladies. Queen Elizabeth was an accomplished performer on it, and the Elizabethan composers wrote for it with a skill and ingenuity quite unparalleled in any other country. From a Shakespearian point of view, however, it is of slight importance, except for the fact that the collections of virginal music of the period are a most valuable source for the popular tunes and other pieces of music alluded to by name in Shakespeare and his contemporaries. It does not seem to have been in use in the theatres, either public or 'private', and, indeed, could hardly have been effective there.

The organ, on the other hand, was certainly used in the theatre; it is expressly mentioned in Marston's *Sophonisba*, combined with various other instruments. The word *organ* at this period generally signifies an instrument with flue-pipes; there was also the regal, a small instrument with beating reeds, something like a diminutive harmonium, but decidedly harsher in

<sup>1</sup> The scene is Fletcher's, certainly.

tone, if one may judge from the surviving specimens. It must be borne in mind that the organ in Shakespeare's day was not exclusively a church instrument; small chamber organs were often to be found in private houses, and as they were easily moved about, often more easily than a modern grand pianoforte, they could be used in theatres without practical difficulty. The regal was even more obviously portable.

The regal was often associated with melancholy situations; it was used thus by Monteverdi in his *Orfeo*. Probably the 'infernal music' of *Sophonisba* was played on the regal. The organ, with its brighter tone, was quite often used for dance music, and its employment does not necessarily signify any solemnity. A quartet of recorders sounds exactly like a small chamber organ, and indeed the obvious function of an organ was to save labour, since one player at the keyboard could do the work of four or more instrumentalists.

In modern music, whether serious or frivolous, public or domestic, we may notice four instruments, the tone of which is generally prevalent to our ears—pianoforte, violin, clarinet and horn. These four qualities of tone were entirely absent from Elizabethan music. The Elizabethans had no idea of combining instruments into anything like the modern orchestra or even like the orchestra of Haydn and Mozart. They had a strong sense of what we call instrumental colour, and of the possibilities of using it for dramatic effect; but their method was to group the instruments in families, not to use them all together, although they often made use of small mixed combinations of three or four instruments with or without voices. Such combinations were called 'broken consort' or 'broken music'. In domestic performance 'broken music' was inevitable, as parts had to be played by such instruments as were available at the moment, and this must certainly have often been the practice in the theatres as well when resources were limited.

The mediaeval mysteries had made plentiful use of music, but it consisted for the most part of Latin hymns and antiphons. There are, however, occasional English lyrics interspersed, such as carols and folk-songs, as well as directions for instrumental

music. During the sixteenth century, as the religious plays gradually gave place to plays of purely secular character, the use of songs and instrumental dances was continued and further developed; the Latin hymns and canticles naturally disappeared. A characteristic feature of the plays produced after 1560 was the dumb-show, which was always accompanied by instrumental music. In *Gorboduc* (1562) each act is preceded by a dumb-show, and for each of these different instruments are specified in order to enhance the dramatic effect by appropriate instrumental colour. Violins accompany the first, introducing six wild men clothed in leaves; cornets play for the second, flutes for the third, hautboys for the fourth, drums and flutes for the fifth, which illustrates a battle. This idea must certainly have been derived from the Italian theatre.

We have no record of the actual pieces played in these dramas, but we can at least note the elaborateness of the incidental music. Plays of this kind were acted before cultured audiences, and on special occasions for which money could be spent with some freedom.

Music played an important part in the plays acted by the choristers of the Chapel Royal and other ecclesiastical establishments. The Children of St Paul's Cathedral were also actors; they performed a play before Elizabeth at Hatfield in 1552 and also entertained her, soon after her accession to the throne, in 1559. The Children of Windsor and of Westminster too were greatly encouraged by Elizabeth, and the efficiency of the choirs—incidentally, therefore, of the performance of the plays, their subsidiary occupation—belonging to the Chapel Royal, Windsor and St Paul's was assured by the privilege granted by her of 'taking up'—*i.e.* forcibly impressing—boys from other choirs and schools.

The plays written for his choristers by Richard Edwards, who became Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal in 1561, are of great interest in this respect, owing to the songs which are introduced into them. These songs generally occur in death scenes or other moments of emotional tension; they are intended as the spontaneous personal expression of the character that

sings them, just as in an opera. Their alliterative verse and their frequent repetitions of words and phrases often seem ridiculous to the modern reader who looks at the words alone; but alliterative verse gains a certain force by being set to music, and the repetition of phrases has continued as a common musical device down to our own times, because repetition is a characteristic feature of musical form and can produce an intensification of the emotional effect.

Several of these songs have been discovered in various libraries. They were composed by the leading church musicians of the time, such as Richard Farrant and William Byrd, and as might be expected they often show great musical beauty and expressiveness as well as accomplished craftsmanship. They are generally set with an accompaniment of four viols. Mr Arkwright, who first discovered these songs and pointed out their importance, suggested that possibly some of the songs in Byrd's *Songs of Sadnes and Pietie* may also have been composed for chorister plays.

As the choirs possessed considerable musical establishments it was natural that music should be a conspicuous feature of their plays; and when we look at the songs which have survived, it may be wondered that England never developed out of them something analogous to the opera which was at this very period just beginning to take shape in Italy.

But whatever might have been favourable to this, a variety of things combined to nullify the opportunity. In the 1580's the great vogue of the men's companies of actors began; and, though the skill of the boys in singing, speaking, and even in acting would be great, quite obviously Alleyn, Burbage and their fellows could make a robustly emotional appeal to audiences that boys could not. Moreover, the men's companies, besides having their own apprentices, recruited boys from the choirs and must have profited much by their training.<sup>1</sup>

Not that the boys did not retain a reputation of their own,

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in 1607-8 the King's Men (as Shakespeare's company had then become) took over the Blackfriars theatre, where a boys' company was playing, largely that they might inherit the best of the talent it contained. See Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, II, 215.

and the standard of their skill must have been high when, for some years after 1583, John Lyly was writing plays for them.<sup>1</sup> These plays, rather formally and delicately written (as was to be expected from the author of *Euphues*), must have suited their capacities to a nicety. Edwards with his *Damon and Pithias* may have served in some sort as a model; but Lyly improved upon it vastly. And he certainly gave ample scope for music. *Galathea* provides 'fairies dauncing and playing'; *Endimion*, more fairies and a long dumb-show to be done to music. In *Midas*, Apollo sings to his lute and Pan to his pipe, and in *Mother Bombe* 'three fiddlers' are brought on to play, who must be actors also. And in the eight plays altogether there are at least thirty-two songs. Some of them are directly dramatic—might be called operatic—in their tenor; two in *Sapho and Phao*, more particularly, the concerted

Arme, arme, the foe comes on apace . . . ,

and Vulcan's song, labelled

. . . in making of the arrowes.

But we note no further development in this direction. The boys found other dramatists, who wrote for them very much the same sort of plays as those provided at the men's theatres. They had their periods of great success; once, at least, as we know from *Hamlet*, they again seemed seriously to be rivalling the men. But in the end, after a complexity of difficulties between their 'masters' and with the authorities (they found themselves involved in the dangerous Marprelate controversy), they ceased to count, and their influence upon the drama evaporated. Of their musical aptitude the men's companies absorbed what they conveniently could, but they did nothing to develop it.

Lyly's delicate art, after an interval, is next manifest, rather—though with changed tendencies—in the masque. This had some decorative influence on the theatre, but its music was too costly and elaborate to be transported there. For Campion's masque 'in honour of Lord Hay' (1607) we have directions for four groups of musicians; in the gallery a consort of hautboys, lower

<sup>1</sup> 'For them' must stand for various companies, the history of which, their amalgamations and divisions, is still obscure, though much study has been given to it.

down, on the right of the stage, a group of six voices and six cornets, on the left a group of twelve in which bowed instruments predominated, and lastly, nearer the audience, a group of ten, two violins, a harpsichord and lutes, with a trombone as bass. These groups were employed separately for different parts of the masque. There were also singers who accompanied themselves on lute<sup>s</sup> on the stage; and at the climax of the masque, when the chief dancers made their appearance, Campion utilises his entire orchestra simultaneously, together with groups of five 'voices' on each side of the stage.

Nothing done upon this scale could become a popular entertainment in the economic sense; but here, if anywhere, is the line of descent to opera.

The boys' companies provided music apart from the songs and dance accompaniments and the incidental music in the plays. While the public theatres had their jigs for a finish to the entertainment, at the Blackfriars, when the boys were acting there, one could find music between the acts and as much as an hour of it before the play began.<sup>1</sup>

The Duke of Stettin-Pomerania, on his travels, visited the Blackfriars in September 1602; and he records in his diary an excellent performance upon 'Orgeln, Lauten, Pandoren, Mandoren, Geigen und Pfeiffen', and a boy singing 'cum voce tremula', so delightfully that unless perhaps from the nuns in Milan he had heard nothing on his journey to excel it.

The men's companies in their public, open-air theatres could neither make music so effective nor—at any rate in their earlier days—so well command it. either in quality or quantity (though when, in 1608, the King's Men took over the Blackfriars, it is likely that they took over at least part of its music-customs too and saw to it that the standard was kept up).<sup>2</sup> But music they

<sup>1</sup> For the jig and its music see pp. 35, 160. The custom of inter-act music did not apparently obtain at the public theatres, where conditions would, indeed, have been very unfavourable to its enjoyment. For that reason it is doubtful whether there were more than formal intervals between the acts, or (often) any intervals at all.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke, writing of the year 1634, speaks of 'the Blackfrvrs Musicke, who were then esteemed the best of common (*i.e.* professional) musitiens in London'.

had to have. There were the fanfares blown from the turret upon trumpet or sackbut to announce the beginning of the play. If it were a 'History', or brought kings or any great personages upon the stage, the trumpeter would find employment throughout it, in blowing 'flourishes', 'retreats' and the rest, and taking his share with the drummer in 'alarums' and other such 'effects'. A drummer would be needed for the 'marches', for which, as for the alarums, there are a variety of directions. The alarum may be 'loud', 'low', 'short'—and the march may be 'afar off', may be a dead march, or, as in *Hamlet*, a Danish march may be specifically noted. It is evident that quite a variety of definite 'effects' of this sort were obtained, probable that the audience recognised the significance of the particular 'flourish' or 'retreat' they heard—though when we come to the stage direction in *Antony and Cleopatra*, 'alarum far off, as at a sea-fight', we may feel more doubtful of this. The trumpeter and drummer might also be expected to appear upon the stage in character. In *King Lear*, Edgar, to take up Edmund's challenge, enters 'armed, with a trumpet before him', and a drummer was often, if not invariably, a part of the symbolic 'army' which makes so many entrances in Elizabethan drama. Neither trumpeter nor drummer might be actors in the usually accepted sense; but the musicians were generally capable of at least a few lines if necessary, and, as we have seen, certain of the actors—besides the clowns, who must be expert upon the pipe and tabor at least—would be reasonably skilled upon an instrument or so.

Besides all this, however, there would very often be more elaborate music demanded; a consort of viols, or recorders, or hautboys, or a 'broken consort'. And, whichever for that particular play it might be, they could certainly be hired for the occasion. The airs themselves would be well known. There is no evidence that special music was composed for plays; the signs are rather that the dramatist wrote his lyrics (if he did write and not merely import them) to existing tunes—a custom which, indeed, in large part survived until the mid-nineteenth-century copyright acts put a stop to it. And we definitely know that, for inter-act music in the 'private' theatres, the audience would



call out for their favourite tunes. Musicians of various sorts could be hired. These might be 'Sneak's Noise' itself (if Falstaff did lose his voice with hulloing and singing of anthems, some taste for good music may have been left him!); it may well have been Sneak whom County Paris hired (so inappropriately) for his wedding.<sup>1</sup> But this would seem not to have been quite what was required by Thurio in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, when, for a serenade to Silvia, he speaks of going

...into the city presently  
To sort some gentlemen well skilled in music,

nor to be what Cloten employs for the aubade in *Cymbeline*. Possibly the theatre had to 'make do'; but music of another quality was certainly available. There would be the musicians attached to the households of the companies' own patrons, the Lord Admiral or the Lord Chamberlain, or some other great lord. These were never forbidden to take 'outside engagements'. It may have been a question of cost, as to which, in general, account-books of the time show a wide divergency. In 1561-2, for instance, we have the Dowager Duchess of Suffolk at Grims-thorpe paying the 'Waits' of Lincoln 3s. 4d. 'in rewards for playing'. But the Queen's Trumpeters had had 20s., and so had the Queen's 'violens at New yerestyde'. And 'my lord of Rutland's man who plaied uppon the lute' had, to his own account, received 6s. Such musicians were obtainable, evidently.

The evidence for what happened in these matters at the public theatres while their fortunes were still none too sure is conjectural only. It is worth noting that the stage directions of *Coriolanus* and *Henry VIII*, both late plays, call for wood-wind, brass, drums, and almost certainly for string music too. *Henry VIII*,

<sup>1</sup> *II Henry IV*, Act II, Sc. iv:

'First Drawer: ...see if thou canst find out Sneak's noise; Mistress Doll Tearsheet would fain hear some music'.

This 'noise', or small band, of Master Sneak's is again referred to in Heywood's *The Iron Age*, the writing of which Chambers dates about fifteen years later. It had more than a passing reputation, then. And these two references even suggest that it may have been employed in the theatre. See Naylor's *Shakespeare and Music*, and the *Arden Shakespeare (II Henry IV)*, p. 75 n.

indeed, specifically requires hautboys, drum and trumpets, cornets, lute, not to mention a solo song, and 'four Quirristers singing'. But we do reach some certainty in 1624, with a reference to twenty-one 'Musitions and other necessary attendants' upon the King's Men, the company to which Shakespeare had belonged. By then at least—and presumably for some while before—an orchestra made a part of a theatre's permanent establishment.<sup>1</sup> In general, however, the public theatres could not have provided as good music as the choristers' theatres did. A consort of viols, pre-eminently suited to performance in private houses, would still make its due effect in an indoor theatre, whereas its gentle and delicate tone might easily be lost in the theatres open to the air.

In the public theatres, and almost certainly in the private ones, the normal place for the music was a curtained box called 'the music-room'; a part of the gallery which ran at the back, and, in the later theatres, probably turned to enclose part of the side of the stage. But the musicians were often required to play on the stage itself; and there are instances (as in *Antony and Cleopatra*) where they play under the stage. The 'music-room' survives into the Restoration theatres (which were recognisably like modern ones); and it is not until quite late in the seventeenth century that the orchestra is placed in front of the stage as it is in the theatre of to-day.

Add the undoubted fact that from the beginning music was always considered an attraction, and that as much of it, if not of one kind then another, would be provided as possible; that certain of the actors themselves were evidently capable of playing some instrument when required, and that most professional musicians were capable of playing two or more different instruments, and we have a not inaccurate outline of the part played by music in the Elizabethan drama, undocumented as this has remained.

There can be no doubt whatever that Shakespeare himself had a very considerable knowledge of music. His poems and

<sup>1</sup> See T. W. Baldwin's *Organisation and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company*, p. 10. The document referred to is a 'Protection' from the Master of the Revels.

plays are full of allusions to the art; not only does he speak of music plainly and directly, but he very often mentions technical musical terms in a metaphorical sense. But whereas writers of the nineteenth century seldom mention music without committing some ridiculous error, Shakespeare never makes a mistake, even when he alludes to theoretical details of a difficult and obscure kind.<sup>1</sup> How Shakespeare acquired his knowledge of music can only be conjectured. He would probably have learned the rudiments of music, including sight-singing, at school at Stratford; it is also quite probable that he might have found someone there to teach him to play the lute and possibly the virginals, if not the recorder. We have, however, no evidence as to his abilities as a performer, either instrumental or vocal. It should, however, be noted that although Shakespeare's characters talk more about music than those of his contemporaries, they do not give us as much useful information about the practical details of stage music as some of the other comedies do, and there are various plays by other authors, such as Marston, which have much more copious and elaborate stage directions as to the performance of music.<sup>2</sup>

The music employed in Shakespeare's plays may be classed in three groups—fanfares, dances and songs. The first category includes all the indications of trumpet calls, such as alarms, retreats and tuckets, as well as marches for drums. Music of this type is naturally associated with battles; otherwise the trumpets are reserved for situations connected with kings and princes or other persons of high degree. The very obscure term *sennet* has never been satisfactorily explained, but it is evident that it must have been a long piece of music, as compared with flourishes, etc. Under the heading of dances we may conveniently class all indications of purely instrumental music, whether required for dancing or not, for in Shakespeare's time most of the serious instrumental music composed was written in forms derived from the dance. The Pavan and the Galliard were still in fashion as dances, but the musicians had already begun to treat them as

<sup>1</sup> See Tylor's *Shakespeare and Music*.

<sup>2</sup> *Antonio and Mellida* in particular. Malone Society Reprint, 1921.

pure music, employing their forms for the kind of serious music that later composers would put into string quartets and symphonies. The only other kind of artistic music written at this period is based on the principle of fugue, and is generally given the name of *fantasia* or *fancy*. Music of this type was eminently suited to private performance, but it is hardly likely that it was much used in the theatre, except perhaps in the 'private' theatres, where it may well have been played before the performance—or during entr'actes.

There is no evidence extant as to the actual pieces of music played at the original performances of Shakespeare's dramas. Dr Naylor gives a number of useful suggestions for trumpet flourishes, etc., but they are all of later date and mostly from continental sources. For the dance music of the period there is abundant choice of material, but care must be taken to distinguish between music written definitely for dancing and music which utilises the conventional dance forms for purely artistic purposes. For all details as regards the dances and their steps the reader must be referred to Dr Naylor's book *Shakespeare and Music*.

Shakespeare's use of songs in the plays varies considerably, and it is one of the many, though uncertain, indications of the circumstances of a play's production and the resources at the moment of his company.

In *Love's Labour's Lost* the small boy who played Moth sang, it seems, what was probably an Irish song, its title in the text corrupted to 'Concolinel'.<sup>1</sup> In *I Henry IV*, written a very few years later, the boy who played Glendower's daughter had to sing a song in Welsh. The association of the two things may not be accidental. The songs at the end of *Love's Labour's Lost*, not specifically given to any of the characters, are likely to have been sung by Moth and another boy. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Merchant of Venice* solo singers (in the first certainly adult, in the second probably) come on for the occasion only. We infer—but we must not be too certain—that they were engaged for the particular purpose and occasion. In *The Mer-*

<sup>1</sup> See note in the *Love's Labour's Lost* volume of *The New Shakespeare*.

*chant of Venice* some of the minor actors and attendants 'bear the burden', i.e. sing the chorus. But very few Elizabethans, on the stage or off, would not have been able to do that respectably. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* the singers (and dancers) seem to be children, and a fair number of them would be needed. But these two plays, it is agreed, were written for special occasions—there is indeed no evidence that they were ever seen upon the public stage at all—and for such occasions children could easily be recruited.<sup>1</sup>

In *Much Ado About Nothing* and *As You Like It* the (obviously adult) solo singer is a character in the play; a quite unimportant one, but his few lines would need speaking well. There is, it is possible to argue, a hint in *Much Ado About Nothing* that he was not even a very expert singer. But music abounds in these two comedies. There are two dances in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and in *As You Like It* two boy singers besides Amiens. Touchstone can sing also; and there is a masque, which demands 'still music'. It has been suggested that Shakespeare was thus lavish because the competition of the 'Children of the Chapel'—of the little eyases who so plagued Hamlet's actor-visitors—was beginning to be felt. Be that as it may these two comedies are made for the help of music, and may need it the more because they are largely written in prose. *Twelfth Night* follows close upon them, and again abounds in music. There is the music played to the moody Count Orsino; there are the catches sung by Sir Toby and Sir Andrew; there are above all Feste's songs, three of them. Nor was this the actor who sang as Balthazar and Amiens, but (we may almost be sure) Robert Armin, the company's new clown. Armin would appear to have been a very different sort of person from Tarlton or Kempe (who were always apt to speak more than was set down for them), and it is thought that later Shakespeare fitted him with the Fool in *King Lear*, who had indeed to be singer and actor too.<sup>2</sup> But the music in *Twelfth Night* shows

<sup>1</sup> One sees, in fact, the choristers' schools contributing their strength to the adult company.

<sup>2</sup> Into the text of the Fool's part in *King Lear*, however, have crept one or two matters, one bawdy passage in particular, which may, one fears, have been Armin's.

signs of rearrangement. Viola, who, when she urges the sea-captain to present her in disguise to Orsino, says

... I can sing  
And speak to him in many sorts of music...

was obviously to be allowed to sing; and there are patent signs in the text that 'Come away, death' was originally her song.<sup>1</sup> A boy's singing voice will crack; yet, if he can act Viola well one will not be quick to divest him of the entire part. There had been a boy who could both sing and act in *Julius Caesar*, written a year or so earlier; there is a boy to sing 'Take, oh take those lips away' in *Measure for Measure*, though no acting is asked of him. Ophelia has

...chanted snatches of old tunes...

and soon after the boy Desdemona must sing the Willow Song and sing it well; and acting enough is also asked of him.

We are now in the period of the great tragedies, and while the songs are few they have acquired a very definite dramatic function.<sup>2</sup> They are associated with abnormal states of mind, as with Ophelia and—since he is pretending to be mad—with Edgar in *King Lear*. No originality, of course, can be claimed for Shakespeare in this. Mad people sing snatches of song in other plays, and so, very often, do people when they are distraught in real life. He uses music as one of the means of restoring the suffering King Lear to sanity. This is a trifle more remarkable; but from the days of David and Saul music has been held to have something of that power. He uses music to hold Leontes spell-bound while the statue of Hermione comes to life; but it has always played its part, on the stage and off, when any sort of magic is working. With far subtler art he uses Desdemona's song, both to show us her suffering wrought at the moment to a point beyond all normal expression, and to insert, for contrast, a touch of quiet beauty before the brutal horror of her murder comes.

Music has its share in the comedies of the last period too. In

<sup>1</sup> See the new Cambridge *Shakespeare*, *Twelfth Night*, p. 100. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For a full study of this see Richmond Noble's *Shakespeare's Use of Song*.

*The Winter's Tale*, Autolycus, the itinerant ballad-vendor (the type still survives) and thief, who must sing his songs to sell them, demands an actor who can sing, and sing well. Robert Armin may have played this part too. In *Cymbeline*, besides the aubade, we have the curious touch of the 'ingenious instrument' in Belisarius's cave, which will play music if you 'give it motion'.

Mechanical instruments already existed in Shakespeare's time. The inventory of Henry VIII's musical instruments (British Museum, Harl. 1419) includes 'a virginall that goethe with a whele without playing uppon', and Athanasius Kircher (*Musurgia Universalis*, Rome, 1650) describes various elaborate mechanical instruments which were probably existing at least 20 years before his book was printed. Mechanical carillons are of still earlier date. It is highly improbable that a mechanical instrument was actually used in the theatre; it could be simulated by an organ or indeed by any kind of music.

What Shakespeare mainly wanted was an accompaniment to the speaking of the threnody

Fear no more the heat o' the sun

which the consort of viols, or whatever had gone with the aubade, could provide. The 'ingenious instrument' gave a dramatic excuse for it.

*The Tempest*, last of the plays, and half masque in spirit and form, naturally abounds in music. Nor has Shakespeare ever used it more dramatically. But never once does it dominate the play. As Prospero holds Ariel captive, so does Shakespeare keep music the servant of his drama still.

There has been much discussion of the relation of Shakespeare's songs to what is called folk-music, especially since folk-music has been made a special object of study and almost a religious cult. The literature and the music (printed or manuscript) of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England show us clearly that there were a large number of simple tunes which enjoyed a very widespread popularity. Their authorship is for the most part unknown, and it is impossible to guess at the

actual date of their composition on the internal evidence of style. These melodies are generally spoken of as traditional folk-tunes, and recently there has been a tendency to invest them with a kind of halo of sanctity, as if they were the fruits of a special inspiration denied to the composers of serious music. All we can truthfully say of them is that they were the popular tunes of their day. They are frequently to be found in the works of the serious composers, used for instance as themes for elaborate sets of variations for the virginals. In the theatre such tunes as 'Brave Lord Willoughby' and 'Fortune my foe' were used as musical settings of the jigs that were the delight of popular audiences. It is obvious that the popular theatre always makes use of popular tunes, and equally obvious that a tune is likely to become popular if it is heard in the theatre.

The question has often been raised how far Shakespeare was indebted to traditional music and to the words of traditional songs, but it is one which cannot be answered with any satisfactory degree of certainty. There are in the plays many allusions to the words of songs and ballads older than Shakespeare's time, and for many of these the music is extant; but these songs are seldom actually sung in the plays, or sung only in snatches. And not all of these musical allusions refer to traditional ballads; Dr Naylor points out that 'Farewell, dear heart' (*Twelfth Night*) was a song composed by Robert Jones and published in 1600, the year before the appearance of the play. As regards the complete songs in the plays, the difficulty of discovering the truth about them is complicated by possible corruption of the text in printing. Modern criticism assigns some to Shakespeare and some to other writers; a further difficulty arises from the fact that, when a tune is found that seems to belong to a Shakespeare song, the melody will not always fit the words ascribed to Shakespeare. It is still a matter of uncertainty, for instance, whether 'It was a lover and his lass' (*As You Like It*) and 'O mistress mine' (*Twelfth Night*) were written by Shakespeare and set to music afterwards by Morley, or whether Morley's settings were in existence before Shakespeare wrote his plays; in any case Morley's music and Shakespeare's words do not agree as



satisfactorily as one would expect if Morley had composed the music for the actual first performance. It is further uncertain whether the tunes are Morley's own composition or whether he did no more than arrange tunes already well known.

Apart from these two songs of Morley the only other settings of Shakespeare's songs that are anywhere near contemporary are Dr John Wilson's settings of 'Lawn as white as driven snow' (*The Winter's Tale*) and 'Take, oh take those lips away', and Robert Johnson's of 'Full fathom five' and 'Where the bee sucks'. But it is considered improbable that any of these are the settings of the original performances; Johnson's music may have been written for a revival of *The Tempest* in 1613;<sup>1</sup> Wilson's settings must date from considerably later, as he was not born until 1594.<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested that many of Shakespeare's songs were written to tunes already in existence, although those tunes may not be known to us now; but it is difficult to see how convincing proof of this theory can be established, even if its plausibility be admitted.

The influence of the masque on Shakespeare's plays is a subject more appropriate to some other chapter of this book; but it must be mentioned here because it is also a question of musical interest. The influence of the masque is most strikingly apparent in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*; and these two plays, together with the Carolan masques, are the direct ancestors of Purcell's English operas. The masque, as a stage form, was deficient in dramatic interest, but it offered opportunity for music in large quantities—for long stretches of continuous music which enabled a composer to group movements together so as to build up an extended musical construction. That is its chief contribution to the development of English opera. The Elizabethan chorister plays, as we have seen, if they had been further developed, might ultimately have led to real opera, for they admitted the basic principle of opera, the use of song as the direct expression of feeling in a character represented at a moment of emotional crisis.

<sup>1</sup> It is likely that the play had been first produced only in 1611.

<sup>2</sup> But see Baldwin's *Organisation and Personnel of the Shakespearian Company*, p. 420.

The jigs, with which the performances at the public theatres used commonly to end, may be considered as a very primitive form of comic opera, for in these the whole drama was written in a ballad metre and sung to well-known ballad tunes repeated over and over again for each stanza. But the jig was too primitive and coarse an entertainment to attract the interest of serious musicians; it made its very natural appeal to audiences by its humorous situations and by the pleasure which ordinary people obtain from hearing a simple popular tune many times repeated.

Shakespeare, for all his knowledge of music and sensitiveness to the theatrical value of music, never adopts the principle of opera. Mr Percy Scholes, starting from the very reasonable basis that music in Shakespeare was often associated with magic and the supernatural, worked out an ingenious theory that Shakespeare's use of music was invariably intended to signify some abnormal psychological state. This theory, however, has not found favour with Shakespearian scholars. The association of music with the supernatural goes back, it need hardly be said, to very ancient times, and in this case Shakespeare did no more than follow a tradition ready to hand. Music was obviously an attraction to Elizabethan audiences, and it has been shown that the Shakespearian theatre eventually became sufficiently prosperous to be able to hire as many musicians as might be wanted. The musical element is most conspicuous in *The Tempest*, and *The Tempest* is a play abounding in effects of magic. Whether Shakespeare wrote the play in order to make copious use of music, or whether he employed music because it was appropriate to that particular dramatic idea, is a question which can only be answered by conjectural speculation. The function of the songs in the part of Ariel would seem to be to distinguish him as a supernatural character from the ordinary mortals; this at any rate was the view of Dryden. If Shakespeare had had any conception of the Italian operatic principle he would have made Hamlet or Othello burst into melody at moments of crisis. Those of his characters who are generally provided with songs are intended to represent persons who, if

they had existed as real people, would have learned music as an accomplishment and have been ready to sing when occasion required, either as a social entertainer like Feste, or a vendor of ballads like Autolycus.

From the operative point of view music is the normal language in which human intercourse is carried on; Shakespeare, however, except perhaps in the case of Ariel, and the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, gets no nearer to this principle than the adoption of poetry as a normal language. Music is for him always something extraneous, as it is in ordinary daily life. A composer of opera regards his characters as creating the music which they sing out of their own emotions; Shakespeare is concerned only with the effect of music on those who listen to it. His listeners are not his audience alone, but in all cases the characters on the stage as well. We may include among the listeners even those who sing, for they sing (as many people habitually do, unless they are professional musicians) for the pleasure of singing. It is an attitude of reception, not of creation.



# THE NATIONAL BACKGROUND

BY

G. B. HARRISON

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## I

TENNYSON in one of his less happy phrases sang of 'the spacious times of great Elizabeth', and panegyrists of the age of Shakespeare have ever since been at pains to stress its gay colours and sombre contrasts, as if the men of that generation differed from all others. Even Lytton Strachey, who was hardly to be reckoned among the romantics, wrote:

by what art are we to worm our way into those strange spirits, those even stranger bodies? The more clearly we perceive it, the more remote that singular universe becomes. With very few exceptions—possibly with the single exception of Shakespeare—the creatures in it meet us without intimacy; they are exterior visions, which we know but do not truly understand. It is, above all, the contradictions of the age that baffle our imagination and perplex our intelligence. Human beings, no doubt, would cease to be human beings unless they were inconsistent; but the inconsistency of the Elizabethans exceeds the limits permitted to man. Their elements fly off from one another wildly; we seize them; we struggle hard to shake them together into a single compound, and the retort bursts. How is it possible to give a coherent account of their subtlety and their *naïveté*, their delicacy and their brutality, their piety and their lust?<sup>1</sup>

Such romantic exaggeration arises from the easy mistake of judging a generation by its exceptional men and books, and not by the average. Sir Philip Sidney was the pattern of perfect knighthood, but his contemporaries admired him because he

<sup>1</sup> *Elizabeth and Essex*, pp. 8-9.

was so different from themselves; *The Faerie Queene*, *Tamburlaine*, *Hamlet*, Bacon's *Essays*, Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* are not everyday specimens of Elizabethan literature but the museum pieces of an epoch. It will, in like manner, be possible for the superficial historian in another age to stress the glories of the Georgian era by evoking as typical of its spirit the attack on Zeebrugge, Rupert Brooke's poems, *St Joan*, *The Dynasts* or *The Testament of Beauty*.

For the serious student of any period, the average is more important than the conspicuous exception. Most Elizabethan books—poetry, drama or prose—are cumbersome and tedious to read, and when the common man in his actions and motives is considered, it will be seen that the character of the Englishman has changed very little in its essentials. Shakespeare's England, far from being spacious, was in many ways narrowly confined, and not least in the means of exchanging ideas.

It is difficult for moderns to realise a world in which news and opinions could not be rapidly disseminated in newspapers or periodicals. The newspaper tends to make men unsociable; when one can read at home there is less need to go abroad to tavern or ordinary to learn the latest rumour, so that, except at times of emergency and censorship, the newsmonger in public places is regarded as a nuisance. Shakespeare's contemporaries, lacking regular newspapers, had of necessity to exchange views by word of mouth. In towns, and especially in London, they lived more in public, frequenting the Court, the Paul's Cross sermon, or the law courts at Westminster, ordinaries and play-houses; they existed therefore in a state of perpetual gossip and scandal, often of rumour and alarm. Moreover, no free discussion of State matters was tolerated; criticism of the Government was easily magnified into sedition or high treason. Even in Parliament, which was only summoned at intervals of four or five years, members were forbidden to debate matters of high policy. In 1593, for instance, Queen Elizabeth forbade the question of her successor to be brought up, and when one Peter Wentworth presented a petition on the subject, he was sent to the Tower, where he remained till he died three years later.

In such conditions men were naturally more excitable and emotional than they are to-day, and more subject to sudden panic and prevailing moods; and, as there were always apprentices and masterless men eager for a riot on the least provocation, the crowd-scenes in *II Henry VI*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus* were very near to common experience.

Shakespeare has several times depicted the effects of rumour, notably in *King John* (iv, ii, 186) and in the prologue to *II Henry IV*, which is spoken by 'Rumour, painted full of tongues'. There was no exaggeration here. In the news-letters and diaries of the time there are constant references to the wildest gossip and alarms. One notable instance is described in a letter written by John Chamberlain on August 9th, 1599, at the time of the false report of a Spanish invasion:

Upon Monday, toward evening, came news (yet false) that the Spaniards were landed in the Isle of Wight, which bred such a fear and consternation in this town as I would little have looked for, with such a cry of women, chaining of streets, and shutting of the gates, as though the enemy had been at Blackwall.

The panic subsided, and when it was clear that all the preparations for defence had been due to false alarm, another crop of sensational rumours was soon flourishing. A fortnight later Chamberlain wrote:

The vulgar sort cannot be persuaded but that there was some great mystery in the assembling of these forces, and because they cannot find the reason of it many make wild conjectures, and cast beyond the moon; as sometimes that the Queen was dangerously sick, other-while that it was to show some that are absent that others can be followed as well as they, and that if occasion be, military services can be as well and readily ordered and directed as if they were present, with many other as varied and frivolous imaginations as these.<sup>1</sup>

Even more sensational was the sudden rumour which spread round London in the morning of March 22nd, 1606, that King James had been assassinated at Woking. The train-bands were at once paraded; the palace guards doubled, the gates of

<sup>1</sup> *Letters written by John Chamberlain during the reign of Queen Elizabeth*, Camden Society, 1861, pp. 59, 62.

the Tower shut, and the cannon loaded. This rumour began about 6.30 in the morning, and spread (with many circumstantial details) until after 9, when a proclamation was made that the report was false.

The theatres occupied a peculiar position in the life of London. Sober business men avoided them as injurious to public morals, because the plays often presented unseemly themes, and as a hindrance to trade, because the apprentices were tempted to waste their afternoons. They were too a general meeting place for young gentlemen of means and leisure, and the disreputable characters who follow such. Moreover when free speech was repressed, men found in drama a speaking commentary upon life which existed nowhere else. Many plays directly criticised or presented recent events. In July 1597, for instance, all theatres were closed for three months because of *The Isle of Dogs*, a play written by Nashe and Jonson, which contained 'very seditious and slanderous matter'. In October 1599 the Battle of Turnhout (fought in January 1597) was enacted and living worthies were introduced on the stage, particularly Sir Francis Vere; it was noted that the player taking the part was carefully made up to represent the original, who was actually in London at the time. In May 1601 the Privy Council directed the magistrates of Middlesex to take action upon a complaint

that certain players that use to recite their plays at the Curtain in Moorfields do represent upon the stage in their interludes the persons of some gentlemen of good desert and quality that are yet alive under obscure manner, but yet in such sort as all the hearers may take notice both of the matter and the persons that are meant thereby.

In December 1604 Chamberlain notes:

The tragedy of *Gowry*,<sup>1</sup> with all the action and actors, hath been twice represented by the King's Players, with exceeding concourse of all sorts of people. But whether the matter or manner be not well handled, or that it be thought unfit that Princes should be played on the Stage in their lifetime, I hear that some great Councillors are much displeased with it, and so 'tis thought shall be forbidden.

<sup>1</sup> *Winwood's Memorials*, II, 41. The Gowry affair, when James narrowly missed assassination, occurred in 1600.



The nuisance was more common in the private theatres, where dramatists, through the mouths of the boy players, were at times very impudent and constantly in trouble. In 1605 Jonson, Chapman and Marston were imprisoned for some disrespectful remarks concerning the Scots and King James's new 'forty pound knights' in their play *Eastward Hoe*; and in 1608 the Children's Company at the Blackfriars was suppressed and disbanded because they acted, contrary to express orders, *The Conspiracy of Biron*, a play dealing with French history of six years before, and introducing the reigning French king, with his wife and mistress in an unseemly bickering.

Players did not confine their commenting to national or local affairs; they attacked each other. Different theatres had their own local supporters; competition was keen; and there was considerable feeling between rival companies, which led in 1600 and 1601 to the 'war of the theatres'.

Though plays dealing directly with recent events were only a small proportion of the whole, audiences instinctively took notice 'both of the matter and the persons'; and not only in dramas but in all kinds of literary work. History, in particular, was studied because of the parallels it offered to modern times: one of the most telling passages in Bacon's Speech for the prosecution of Essex was his apt comparison of Essex with Pisistratus: Ben Jonson, in the margin of his copy of Greenaway's translation of *The Annals* of Tacitus, noted opposite the account of the fall of Sejanus 'The Earl of Essex'.

A good example of the way in which a double meaning was frequently read, and often intended, is the case of Dr John Hayward's unfortunate *History of Henry the Fourth*. For some curious reason the followers of Essex found a satisfactory parallel between Queen Elizabeth and the story of Richard the Second and his deposition; and it was probably for this cause that when Shakespeare's play was published in 1597 it went rapidly into three editions. Early in 1599 Hayward published a book on the *History of Henry the Fourth*, which related in some detail, and with considerable imagination, the events leading up to the deposition of Richard. He dedicated the book to Essex in a

somewhat equivocal Latin Epistle. Immediately the Council suspected that the book was seditious, and at intervals during the next two years Hayward was closely cross-examined, and at length imprisoned in the Tower. Moreover, the Essex conspirators confirmed the suspicions of the Council when, three days before the rising, they bribed the Chamberlain's players to act *Richard II* at the Globe. The significance of the book and of the historical parallel was one of the points which the preachers were commanded to stress in their sermons after the rebellion.

It follows, therefore, that to comprehend what Shakespeare wrote, his plays must be seen against the national background, which can only be built up by a close study of those events, great and small, which were likely to have excited the minds of the first spectators of a new play.

## II

The background of Elizabethan drama from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (c. 1587) to *Hamlet* (published in 1603) was a great war.

The most spectacular of the early engagements was the coming of the great Spanish Armada and its destruction by tempest in the late summer of 1588. In the following year a combined naval and military force was despatched to Portugal with the object of setting the pretender, Don Antonio, on the throne. The 'Portugal voyage' was not a success, for, although Corunna and Lisbon were entered and destroyed, there were great losses by sickness, and on their return the demobilised soldiers and sailors for some weeks terrorised the City of London. In the autumn a force was despatched under Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby, to aid Henri de Navarre against the Catholic League and their Spanish allies. The next year English soldiers were helping the Dutch in the Low Countries. By the end of 1590 the Spaniards began to penetrate Brittany, and in 1591 two English expeditions were sent over; Sir Roger Williams was in command of a small army in Normandy, and Sir John Norris entered Brittany. In the autumn, the Earl of Essex, took over a larger force to Normandy and assisted Henri in the siege of

Rouen; his troops included a company of gentlemen from the City as well as a considerable body of personal followers. The siege, however, was hurriedly abandoned in the spring of 1592; it was during these months that the heroic speeches of brave Talbot in *I Henry VI* aroused such enthusiasm amongst Bankside audiences. For the next year Henri fought a losing war, until in 1593 he came to terms with the League and was admitted into the Catholic Church. There was some natural alarm in England, as it seemed likely that with a change of faith he might also change sides; but when it was clear that Henri would continue the war against Spain, another English expedition under Norris and Frobisher drove the Spaniards out of Brest; but Frobisher died of his wounds.

No important engagements by land occurred in 1595, but persistent reports came from Spain that a new and greater armada was preparing. In the summer Hawkins and Drake set out on a combined voyage to South America from which they never returned. In many quarters there was a feeling of panic. Anger with the French was growing; it was suspected that Henri was about to desert his allies and that the Catholics in England might rise when the enemy appeared. It was decided therefore to carry the war into the enemy's country, and in the autumn orders went out that a great fleet was to be assembled in the spring.

The next year (1596) was full of excitement. In April news came that the Spaniards from the Low Countries had suddenly invested Calais. Men were hastily demanded from the trainbands of the City of London, and, by order from the Lord Mayor, the constables shut the people in their parish churches as they were making their Easter Communion until 1000 men had been impressed. Meanwhile Essex and Lord Charles Howard, the Lord Admiral, hurried down to Dover to collect as many ships and men as possible for the relief force. All the next day the sound of cannon could be heard in London, but as the fleet was ready to sail news came that Calais had fallen. The great fleet set sail in June, and on the 20th appeared before Cadiz, which was captured after a heroic naval action. The city was occupied, sacked and

burnt, and many Spanish ships were destroyed. It was a gallant, flamboyant success, and brought back good plunder. With the expedition went out many young men of fashion, of the same kind as accompanied King John in the play—

And all the unsettled humours of the land,  
With ladies' faces and fierce dragons' spleens,  
Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,  
Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs,  
To make a hazard of new fortunes here.

The Cadiz Voyage of 1596 was succeeded by the Islands Voyage of 1597. This time Essex was in sole command. The expedition on the whole was a failure. Its start was long delayed by the bad weather in the summer, so that, instead of raiding the coasts of Spain, the fleet made for the Azores, where some ships were taken, but much booty was lost through the incompetence of Essex. In October, before the fleet had returned, there was a general alarm of a Spanish invasion, and the forces in the southern counties were partially mobilised. The new armada had indeed set sail, but was scattered by a storm when two days' sail from Land's End.

The war with Spain languished somewhat in 1598. Peace negotiations were opened, during which the French, contrary to their treaty with England, secretly made a peace with the Spaniards, leaving England and the Low Countries to carry on the war alone. In the summer England was occupied with a war in Ireland, which soon proved more costly than any foreign expeditions. For some years rebellion had been growing, largely owing to the corruption of the services, civil and military. In August 1598 Tyrone defeated the main English force near Armagh, with a loss of some 2000 out of a total of 3500, and by the end of the year it looked as if the English would be driven out of the country. In the following March Essex was sent over as Lord Deputy with a large army of 16,000 men, well found and equipped.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This Irish Expedition—comparing population and national finances—was a greater military effort than the despatch of the Expeditionary Force in 1914. Moreover, an army which varied from 12,000 to 16,000 was maintained in Ireland until the end of the reign, being fed and paid from England.

The great war with Spain evoked a whole gamut of national emotions. In 1592, when expeditions to the continent were still popular, the fire-eating patriotism of Talbot coincided with general feeling. Later, in the anxious times of 1595 and 1596, a deeper feeling of patriotism was prevalent, and the saying passed current 'If we be true within ourselves, we need not care or fear the enemy'; it was reflected in dying Gaunt's speech on England, and the closing lines of *King John*:

This England never did, nor never shall,  
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,  
But when it first did help to wound itself.  
Now these her princes are come home again,  
Come the three corners of the world in arms,  
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,  
If England to itself do rest but true.

Eighteen months later, after the sordid controversies arising from the Islands Voyage, military glory seemed to have grown somewhat fusty. Shakespeare reflects a prevalent feeling in Falstaff's cruel parody of Hotspur's worship of bright honour. In *II Henry IV* the cynicism is even more pronounced, and the heroic exaltation of 'this other Eden, demi-paradise' has degenerated to 'it was always a trick of our English nation, if they have a good thing to make it too common'; whilst the scene of Falstaff's abuse of his commission, when he accepted bribes to release the best recruits, was a dramatising of a common scandal. Twelve months afterwards, the spectacular departure of Essex to Ireland aroused a general spirit of patriotism which is directly mentioned in the chorus before Act v of *Henry V* and constantly reflected in the heroic speeches in the play.

Essex accomplished nothing effective. The army was frittered away by disease, and in September he made a truce with Tyrone. Then, contrary to his express orders, with most of his staff and many of his regimental commanders, he left his post and appeared without warning before the Queen. During his absence there had been another alarm of a Spanish invasion, and a general mobilisation of the home forces was ordered to concentrate at London, where training proceeded for some weeks.

Essex was succeeded in Ireland by Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, who rapidly changed the situation. He planted large garrisons in strategic points, and with a mobile force continually harried the rebels. In the late summer of 1601, however, the Spaniards sent a force of 3000 men to Tyrone's assistance, which occupied Kinsale. Mountjoy was thus faced with a winter campaign with sickly troops. He had to contain the Spaniards and at the same time prevent Tyrone from uniting with them.

Meanwhile the Spaniards had become very active in the Low Countries, where there had been intermittent fighting for the last ten years, and in July 1601 the Archduke of Austria, who had married the Infanta of Spain, began to invest Ostend. Sir Francis Vere was put in command of the combined English and Dutch forces, and for the next nine months defended the town against great odds. The fiercest attacks were made at Christmas-tide 1601, when an assault by 10,000 Spanish troops was repulsed with enormous slaughter after an all-night battle. The enormous cost and the superb gallantry shown by both sides in the three years' siege of Ostend moved Camden to comment: 'the stoutest and bravest soldiers of the Low Countries, Spain, England, France, Scotland and Italy, whilst they eagerly contended for a barren plot of sand, found here as it were one common sepulchre, though withal it were an eternal monument of their valour'. Hamlet likewise cried pity and admiration upon

The imminent death of twenty thousand men,  
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,  
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
Which is not tomb enough and continent  
To hide the slain.

The news of Vere's success reached London early in January 1602; a few days later it was learnt that Mountjoy had utterly defeated Tyrone, and that the Spaniards in Kinsale had surrendered. The war in Ireland lasted for another year, but the rebellion was completely subdued, and Tyrone finally submitted a few days after the Queen's death on March 24th, 1603.

For the first twelve years the burden of the war had not been too serious, and the number of men demanded from the counties was comparatively small. After 1598, however, the burden became excessive, and the drain of men was heavy and continuous; in July 1601 alone 8000 men were demanded to reinforce the armies at Ostend and in Ireland.

Englishmen were thus very familiar with war, and many of them had seen active service. Of literary men, for instance, Spenser took an active part in Irish affairs and his house was burnt by the rebels; Lodge went on Cavendish's expedition; Donne was present at Cadiz; and Jonson was a volunteer in the Low Countries. Unfortunately so little is recorded of Shakespeare's early life that the source of his intimate familiarity with soldiers and the details of campaigning is unknown. Soldiers and warfare are in varying degrees the theme in the majority of his plays, and in *Fluellen*, *Gower*, and *Falstaff* he created permanent monuments of different types of Elizabethan officer.

### III

Many other events occupied the tongues of gossips during these years. A long and costly war, as always, provoked much social unrest; it took various forms, frequently religious. Political parties had not yet come into existence, but since the theory of the state was based upon the interpretation of Christian doctrine it followed that the three principal forms of religion—Catholic, Established Church and Puritan—to a considerable extent expressed different views of the social order. In the accepted theory the Queen was supreme head of Church and State, and she constantly insisted in her speeches and public documents that she was directly under God's special blessing and His Vicegerent in the realm. The Church, through the bishops and other officers and clergy, had many and important functions and obligations in the State. The censorship of books, for instance, was in the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London; in the parishes the churchwardens were responsible for the relief of the poor and impotent; whilst

public morals were (in theory) safeguarded in the ecclesiastical courts. To rebel against the established order was thus, in the eyes of its supporters, to defy God. The position was emphatically put in the play of *Sir Thomas More*—in the scene attributed to Shakespeare himself—when More harangued the mob of London rioters:

For to the King God hath His office lent  
Of dread, of justice, power and command,  
Hath bid him rule, and will'd you to obey;  
And, to add ampler majesty to this,  
He hath not only lent the King His figure,  
His throne and sword, but given him His own Name,  
Calls him a god on earth. What do you then  
Rising 'gainst him that God Himself installs,  
But rise 'gainst God?

Both Puritans and Catholics accepted the doctrine that the social order must be founded on the will of God, but regarded the established State as anti-Christian.

The Catholics were, by the State, regarded as the greater danger, for when Pope Pius V excommunicated Queen Elizabeth in 1570 he absolved Catholics from their duties of allegiance, and it was a matter of great anxiety whether, in the event of an invasion, Catholics would fight for or against the Queen. It was difficult too to know who were Catholics in secret, for, although the compromise in doctrine and ritual made at the beginning of the reign was generally accepted, there were many, especially amongst the upper classes, who would have welcomed a restoration of the old faith.

A man's religion was thus something more than an intellectual acceptance or refusal of certain dogmas. Not only was he influenced by family and sentimental loyalties, but his material comfort, perhaps even life, depended on his choice. Two factors went against Catholicism: those who had received a large share of the immense plunder of the dissolved monasteries were firmly for the Established Church; and, as of old, when the quarrel lay between an English sovereign and a foreign pope, national sentiment was stronger than religious, so that the disloyal efforts



of the English Jesuits did immense harm to the Catholic cause, and especially after the Gunpowder Plot. Most of the better known writers passed through trials of faith. Donne's family was Catholic and had suffered for its religion; and he made his choice of the Establishment only after considerable hesitation; Jonson was converted to Catholicism whilst in prison in 1597; Lodge turned Catholic, and probably also Campion. Marlowe, having apparently gone up to Cambridge to train for ordination, became agnostic. Marston, after a period of agnosticism, turned churchman. Shakespeare's family was apparently Catholic, and his father was thereby obliged to abandon his public offices at Stratford during the zealous efforts of Bishop Whitgift in the 1570's; it follows that Shakespeare was brought up in the old faith, though there is no evidence of his practice in manhood.

More ardent Catholics kept closely in touch with Rome. Colleges for English youths of good family to be educated under Catholic fathers were established at Rome, Rheims, Douay and Valladolid, and many of these afterwards returned to England as missionaries, principally as members of the Jesuit Order. By law it was treason for a Catholic priest to enter the kingdom, and many of them were executed as traitors. The Jesuits were particularly active in the years immediately before and after the Armada, and in 1591 a stern proclamation was set out denouncing all who should harbour priests as maintainers of traitors.

The fanaticism of the Jesuits did much harm to the Catholic cause in England, and from 1599 to the end of the reign there was an open and undignified feud between the secular priests and the Jesuits. It started at Wisbech Castle (which was used as a place of internment for Catholic prisoners), when a Fr. Blackwell was appointed from Rome to be archpriest of the Catholics in England; though not a Jesuit he was much under the influence of the Order, and being a tactless, tyrannical man he was soon cordially disliked by his fellow-prisoners. The dispute grew so bitter that both sides began to justify themselves by putting out pamphlets and manifestos. Before long Dr Bancroft, Bishop of London, took a hand in the controversy, for he

saw a fine opportunity of creating ill-feeling between English and foreign Catholics. He took the Secular pamphleteers under his protection, and arranged for the printing of their books against the Jesuits. At least forty pamphlets were issued during these months, and the controversy excited considerable feeling. The greatest complaints made by the Seculars were that the Jesuits brought odium on the Catholic religion by openly supporting the Queen's enemies, and by their avowed practice of equivocation, which was too Machiavellian for the Protestant conscience; your absolute Englishman must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo him.

The Seculars indeed hoped that if Jesuits could be separated from Catholics some toleration in religion might be allowed; but in this they were disappointed, for in November 1602 a proclamation was published, banishing the Jesuits from the realm forthwith, but allowing the Seculars two months' grace to submit themselves, and stating emphatically that two religions would not be tolerated in the State.

Whilst the Catholics were believed to be in league with the Queen's enemies abroad, the danger anticipated from the Puritans was rather a social revolution at home. Extreme Puritans claimed that the Bible alone was the expression of God's will, and thence deduced violent and alarming theories of the State. They proposed a kind of democracy whereby their Church was to be organised in local elderships, and thence to district Conferences, Provincial Synods and finally a National Synod which should have supreme power, even over the sovereign. They proposed also that weighty matters affecting the commonwealth should be controlled by Parliament. As for the Church of England, it was an unchristian body, intolerable to a good Englishman. They agreed, however, with the other sects in a rigid determination that the spiritual and material benefits of their religion should be confined to their own members. It was to meet the Puritan view that in the Bible alone was to be found rule of life and salvation that Richard Hooker published his work *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. „

Though such extreme views were held by a small, but rigorous,

minority, a more moderate Puritanism appealed largely to the merchant classes. Moreover, the best of the Puritan leaders and preachers were zealous and austere in their lives, contrasting favourably with the worldlier clergy of the Church of England; and austerity of life was good for business. The sympathies of the merchant classes were very naturally with the Protestants in the Low Countries, who were their best customers, and against the Spaniards, who oppressed them and interfered with trade.

Although in general the merchants inclined towards Puritanism and the professional classes towards the Church or Catholicism, there was as yet no distinct cleavage, nor usually was there any clash of interest between the Court and the City. Younger sons of good family went into business, and elder sons married the daughters of wealthy aldermen. Players, however, were a cause of frequent irritation; whilst the Privy Council considered plays a reasonable amusement, approved and patronised by the Queen, the Common Council of the City regarded theatres as immoral in themselves, a constant temptation to idleness, a rendezvous for rioters, and a likely source for the spread of infection whenever there was any risk of plague. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Puritan was treated unsympathetically by Elizabethan playwrights.

#### IV

Another cause of deep and continuous anxiety was the succession. The memory of the Wars of the Roses and more recently of the troubles that followed Henry VIII's death, with the violent changes from reformation to reaction under Edward VI and Mary, was still vivid. When it was at last obvious that the Queen would never marry and bear children the problem of succession became acute. Catholics supported the claims of Mary Queen of Scots, but after her execution in 1587 there was no obvious heir, and civil war between various claimants, none possessing general support, seemed inevitable. The Queen forbade the matter to be debated, knowing from her own early experience that if the crown was entailed there would be a

general movement to desert her in favour of her successor. In 1595 the problem was very generally discussed, when Fr. Parsons, the leader of the English Jesuits on the continent, produced a book called *A Conference about the next Succession*. Parsons considered the various claimants; they ranged from King James of Scotland and Lady Arabella Stuart, who had claims by descent, to a member of one of the noble families nearly related to the Queen, and, if any foreign prince were considered, to the Infanta of Spain. He concluded that the matter would not be settled without civil war; the soliloquy of the Bastard over Arthur's body (*King John*, IV, iii, 140-59) expressed a parallel foreboding. Parsons maliciously dedicated his book to the Earl of Essex, and in the next five years there were many who favoured Essex himself.

Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, began his career at Court as a protégé of his stepfather, the great Earl of Leicester. After Leicester's death in 1588 Essex, who was then in his early twenties, soon became conspicuous for his romantic ambitions. In defiance of the Queen's orders he joined the Portugal Voyage in 1589. Two years later he was in nominal support of the English force assisting Henri IV; at the early age of twenty-six he was made a member of the Privy Council. His greatest triumph was on the Cadiz Voyage, where he shared the command with Lord Charles Howard, who was thirty years his senior. In action Essex was conspicuously heroic, and his chivalry to the enemy was greatly applauded. Thereafter his fortunes declined as steadily as they had ascended. He came back to Court expecting praise from the Queen, and was bitterly irritated when she began to inquire into the balance sheet of the expedition. The best explanation of his career is to be found in the clear-sighted advice which Bacon offered him at the peak of his career. Bacon warned him of the danger of military greatness and ambition, neglect of punctilious behaviour towards the Queen, and excessive popularity. The advice was ignored, and Essex soon found himself in the dangerous position of being regarded as the natural patron of malcontents. His reputation was still further damaged in the Islands Voyage of 1597. It

was indeed obvious, even to his supporters, that he was not born to command. His romantic desire for military glory degenerated into vanity, and it was easy for his less scrupulous followers to inflame his jealousies by the mere suggestion that his honour was being touched. He came back from the Islands Voyage to find that his enemies at Court had made full use of their chances. From this time onwards he was a menace in the State; for he was dangerously popular in the City of London, with the Puritans and the professional captains; he was, moreover, suspected by his enemies of aiming at the crown.

Essex's relations with the Queen were always uneasy. At times she loaded him with favours and rewards, but he was quick to resent criticism and openly showed his resentment. The most sensational of many incidents occurred in July 1598. Essex wished his own nominee to be sent to Ireland; when the Queen rejected his advice he contemptuously turned his back on her, and received a box on the ear. Essex withdrew from Court in passion, and did not return for ten weeks. Essex's criticisms of the mismanagement of the Irish affair were so strong that early in 1599 he was selected to be Lord Deputy. His departure from London was spectacular. After his sudden return in the autumn he was for many months confined to the house of the Lord Keeper. In June 1600 he was brought before the Star Chamber, when his actions in Ireland were publicly condemned. Soon after he was released and allowed to go free, but he was not permitted to enter the Court. It was still uncertain whether the Queen would restore him to favour. In October, however, the farm of sweet wines, which was the most lucrative of his sources of income, lapsed, and the Queen did not renew it. Essex's fortunes were now precarious; he owed large sums of money; his more desperate followers told him that his honour was smirched, and urged him to make an attempt to force an entry into the palace so that he might personally lay his grievances before the Queen.

Hitherto Essex had lived very privately. Now his house was crowded with gallants and unemployed captains, and Puritan preachers held forth to large audiences, to whom they pro-

claimed that there were circumstances which might justify the deposition of a sovereign. The Council were alarmed at the reports from Essex House. On February 7th, 1601, Essex was summoned to Court to explain the meetings, but he refused to come, alleging that his life was in danger. Next day (which was Sunday) the Lord Keeper Egerton, the Earl of Worcester, Sir William Knollys and the Lord Chief Justice appeared before Essex House and demanded admission. When they entered the courtyard they were surrounded by an excited crowd, almost three hundred strong. Essex conducted them into the house and kept them as prisoners. Then, without further preparation, he led his followers, the Earl of Southampton amongst them, into the City, proclaiming that his life was in danger. The citizens, however, though sympathetic, did not join him. He entered the house of Sheriff Smith, who—so he imagined—would aid with a thousand men of the train-bands, but the sheriff withdrew and warned the Lord Mayor. When at length Essex and his followers emerged, they learnt that the Bishop of London had collected some of the train-bands to resist him. There was fighting at Ludgate Circus, and then Essex made his way down to the river and returned to Essex House by water. The house was prepared for defence. Gradually the little army which had been collected by the Lord Admiral closed round the landward side. There was some sniping and a few casualties. By nine in the evening cannon had been brought from the Tower, and all was in readiness for a bombardment. About ten, Essex and his party surrendered.

Both sides had been taken by surprise, and it was some days before the Council had sifted the evidence enough to discover that no vast conspiracy had been organised. Essex and Southampton were brought to trial on February 19th, and both condemned to death. Essex was executed on February 25th; Southampton was reprieved, but remained a prisoner in the Tower. The conspirators were, on the whole, treated leniently. Only five of Essex's immediate followers were executed; the rest were fined, and after a few months released.

For more than three years the fortunes of Essex caused con-

tinuous excitement, which is abundantly reflected in Shakespeare's plays. During the last phase, when the whole problem of loyalty to the established order was bitterly in controversy, Shakespeare in *Troilus and Cressida* gave Ulysses a speech on 'Degree' which was an obvious comment on the anxieties of the time. Nor could an audience in the months immediately following the Essex rising have failed to notice a parallel in the situation in *Hamlet* where Laertes at the head of a rabble of Danes breaks into the royal presence, to be abashed by the kingly dignity of Claudius—

Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person:  
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,  
That treason can but peep to what it would,  
Acts little of his will.

Kingship and loyalty were indeed constant themes in Shakespeare's plays, and he stressed especially the awful responsibility and loneliness of the sovereign in phrases which Queen Elizabeth herself echoed in a speech to the members of her last Parliament of 1601: 'To be a King', she said, 'and wear a crown is more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasure to them that wear it'. It is noticeable, moreover, that such speeches are most common when they were peculiarly significant to the times; the theme of kingship and its responsibility does not recur after the death of Queen Elizabeth.

The emotions engendered by the fall of Essex produced a bitterness and disillusion very conspicuous in the last years of the reign; Englishmen had to choose between resignation to 'the whips and scorns of time' or disloyalty to the established order and ensuing discord. The causes of this pervading mood of melancholy are complex and difficult to analyse. The mood appears in many forms and few writers of any importance escaped it. Its most prominent expression in literature is in the satires which began with the publication of the first three books of Hall's *Virgidemiarum* in the spring of 1597; in the next two years there followed such collections as Marston's *Scourge of Villanie*, Guilpin's *Skialetheia*, and Donne's unpublished Satires. The movement, however, was suddenly checked when in June

1599 the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London summoned the Wardens of the Stationers' Company and ordered them to gather and burn all copies of a number of the offending collections. On the stage the vogue was transmuted into drama in such plays as Chapman's *Humorous Days Myrth*, Jonson's Comedies of the 'humours' and Marston's *What You Will*. *Hamlet* is the greatest expression of the melancholy of the age.

The problem of the succession had been almost forgotten during the alarms of the last years of Essex's career. After his death the air was cleared. Neither Catholics nor Puritans had any strong candidate for the throne, nor did any of the noblemen who had claims through their descent take any action to dispute the right of King James of Scotland. Those who stood to gain by the change secretly began to open communication with the Scottish Court and to extract unwritten promises from the King. The matter had, however, already been arranged. Sir Robert Cecil, the Queen's secretary (who was almost in complete control of English policy after the death of his father, the great Lord Burghley, in 1598) had compacted with the King that he should be proclaimed on the Queen's death. By the end of 1602 it was obvious that the Queen's health was failing; she died after a few days' illness in the early hours of March 24th, 1603. King James was immediately accepted as King, without dispute, and there was a very general feeling of relief that this dangerous problem had been settled without bloodshed or anarchy.

## V

Many changes came in with the new sovereign. King James was on friendly terms both with the pope and the Spanish King, so that—since wars were still regarded as the personal quarrel of princes—the war came to a sudden end, to the general relief of all but the professional captains and privateers. The reaction, however, from the first enthusiasm was swift. Sober observers were disgusted by the blatant scrambling for the many offices and emoluments which were now vacant. Court officials took bribes to introduce dubious candidates for the knighthoods so



lavishly bestowed. In his first year the King knighted more than nine hundred, and it was a Court joke that an usher had pushed aside the knights to make room for the gentlemen. Before the summer was over the old Queen was very generally regretted, for those very qualities which had seemed irksome were soon magnified into virtues. Thus Sir Roger Wilbraham, compiling a journal of observations for the use of his children, noted that the King was

most bountiful, seldom denying any suit; the Queen strict in giving, which age and her sex inclined her unto: the one often complained of for sparing; the other so benign that his people fear his over-readiness in giving. The Queen slow to resolution and seldom to be retracted: His Majesty quick in concluding and more variable in subsisting. The Queen solemn and ceremonious, and requiring decent and disparent order to be kept convenient in each degree: and though she bare a greater majesty yet would she labour to entertain strangers, suitors and her people with more courtly courtesy and favourable speeches than the King useth: who although he be indeed of a more true benignity and ingenuous nature, yet the neglect of these ordinary ceremonies, which his variable and quick wit cannot attend, makes common people judge otherwise of him.

Wilbraham's notes were written when the King had been on the throne but three months.

There were other details which Wilbraham had not yet had time to observe. The Queen loved the public acclamations of the crowd; she professed, and genuinely, that nothing was so dear to her as the love of her people: James disliked crowds; he tolerated them for the first few weeks, but afterwards he drove them away with abuse. The Queen had an enormous capacity for hard work. She remained, up to the last, the managing director of her kingdom. King James soon tired of State business, spent much of his time in hunting and gave order that he was not to be troubled except with the most urgent of State affairs. The result was a noticeable falling off in the general discipline of the State, which was soon reflected on the stage. The players, it was noted in March 1605, 'do not forbear to present upon their stage the whole course of this present time,

not sparing either King, State, or Religion, in so great absurdity and with such liberty, that any would be afraid to hear them'.

For the first time since the death of Henry VIII there was now a royal family, with the vastly increased expenses of the household. The new Queen was not on the best of terms with her husband, and she liked expensive amusements, so that Court entertainments and pageants were magnificently extravagant. At Christmas 1604 £3000 was expended on the Queen's masque and it was disapprovingly noted that the costumes were more suited to courtesans than to great ladies.

The dignified Court life under Queen Elizabeth soon vanished, and fashionable manners rapidly degenerated. In July 1606 the Danish King paid a state visit to the Court, upon which Sir John Harington (who was no kill-joy) commented 'I think the Dane hath strangely wrought on our good English nobles; for those whom I never could get to taste good liquor now follow the fashion and wallow in beastly delights. The ladies abandon their sobriety and are seen to roll about in intoxication'. Harington went on to describe a masque of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba which was devised for the royal entertainment, but ended disastrously because both the performers and the royal spectators were prostrated by drink. It is small wonder that Hamlet's denunciation of the drunken manners of the Danes should have disappeared from the text of the Folio, or that in the last comedies there should be a pervading sense of disgust at the sordid intrigues of Court life.

At the coming of the King, all who had grievances crowded optimistically to the Court, and in a short time general disappointment set in. The Puritans found that the King had nothing for them; indeed at the Conference held at Hampton Court he rated them soundly. Catholics, who had been led to expect some kind of toleration, were told that the King had said in public audience that he would rather fight in blood to the knees than give toleration of religion. Courtiers of such great standing as Raleigh were put from their posts. Troubles soon began. Raleigh was tried and condemned for the plot to depose the King in favour of the Lady Arabella Stuart in November 1603,

and in 1605 the Gunpowder Plot was only discovered on the night before its execution. It was a stupendous plan whereby the whole executive government of the country would have been destroyed at one clap. The players, however, benefited greatly by the changes, and the various companies now became royal servants. The Lord Chamberlain's Company became the King's Men, the Admirals were taken over by the Prince of Wales, the Children of Blackfriars became the Children of the Queen's Revels.

## VI

In the new reign Shakespeare wrote fewer plays, and the stories which he chose gave less opportunity for significant parallels of situation and emotion. The remarks of Malcolm in *Macbeth* upon the English king's powers of healing 'the Evil' are a topical and, in their context, not particularly happy compliment to King James. In *King Lear* (performed at Court at Christmas, 1606) the words of Gloucester echoed the disgust at the general deterioration of society and the particular abhorrence of the intrigues and plots of the first four years of the new reign:

These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects. Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide; in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked between son and father.<sup>1</sup>

Although such speeches bore a special significance for the first hearers, they are not 'topical allusions'; for it was rather Shakespeare's method to see old stories in the light of modern instance than to season his plays with passing references. Nevertheless there are quite a number of direct references which have been generally accepted. Titania's speech of the nine men's morris 'fill'd up with mud'<sup>2</sup> is a reminder of the vile summer of 1594; Gratiano probably referred to the case of Dr Lopez in cursing Shylock.<sup>3</sup> *Hamlet* is full of topicalities of various kinds.

<sup>1</sup> *King Lear*, I, ii, 114-22.

<sup>2</sup> *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, i, 82-114.

<sup>3</sup> *The Merchant of Venice*, IV, i, 132.

Rosencrantz's comments on the 'aery of children, little eyases' obviously refer to the stage war, whilst Hamlet's strictures on ranting tragedians and extemporising clowns were probably directed against Edward Alleyn and Will Kempe. In *Twelfth Night* there are well-known references to the new map of the Indies, and a pension to be paid from the Sophy, reminding the audience of the recent doings of Sir Anthony Shirley, who, having made his way from Aleppo to Persia, was appointed the Shah's Ambassador Extraordinary to the Russian Court. There are a number of others. Many remarks too which are obviously topical have not yet been explained; such as Hamlet's cryptic observation 'By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe'; or Mistress Mall's picture that was like to take dust; or the exact meaning of Feste's remark that 'words are very rascals since bonds disgraced them'. *Love's Labour's Lost*, in particular, is full of quips which have become quite inexplicable.

A serious student of Shakespeare's plays cannot neglect the national background, for in an age that was in so many ways cribbed and confined the problems of the individual were inseparable from the problems of the State. The picture of a Shakespeare magnificently aloof from life may be pleasing to romantic critics, but it does not square either with the facts, or with Shakespeare's own comment upon his art. 'Players', said Hamlet to Polonius, 'are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time; after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.' Besides, the purpose and end of playing, 'both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure'.

# THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

BY

M. ST CLARE BYRNE

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MANY of the Elizabethan writers are too true to be good. They have given us so faithful a picture of the men and manners of the day that their value as artists is distinctly second to their value as social documents. For the detail that enables us to recreate the Elizabethan scene we go to a dozen other writers rather than Shakespeare. The student who consults such books as Professor Dover Wilson's *Life in Shakespeare's England*, or the present writer's *Elizabethan Life in Town and Country*, finds at once that for the purposes of illustrative quotation Shakespeare figures hardly at all, in comparison to the minor writer. Where the ordinary Elizabethan writer is topical in the situation, characterisation and dialogue of an entire scene, Shakespeare is topical only out of his superfluity—in an aside, a simile, an image, a flourish, a jest. Whereas the contemporaneous is of the very body of the work of such a writer as Ben Jonson it is with Shakespeare largely a matter of separable accident. From Jonson we can extract compact little character sketches of the stock figures of the age, or scenes that are as precise in their Elizabethanism as a document. Isolate from its context in Shakespeare such a scene as the one in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* where Sir Hugh Evans, the schoolmaster, puts little William Page through his paces for the benefit of his mother, and we do not instinctively exclaim 'How Elizabethan!' but probably 'How delightful!' Mrs Page is a mother with a schoolboy son: 'Sir Hugh, my husband says my son profits nothing in the world at his book...'. The Elizabethan matron is the lady of such a

book as *The French Garden*,<sup>1</sup> who gives us both the conscious theory of the age and its somewhat self-conscious contemporary expression when she rebukes her son who gets up late in the morning:

Come hither, friend! I am ashamed to hear that what I hear of you... You have almost attained to the age of nine years, at least to eight and a half, and seeing that you know your duty, if you neglect it you deserve greater punishment than he which through ignorance doth it not. Think not the nobility of your ancestors doth free you to do as you list: contrariwise, it bindeth you more to follow virtue

Ben Jonson put it memorably when he declared that Shakespeare was not of an age but for all time. We are right to feel that he beyond all his fellows escaped more completely from that pressure of immediacy and the contemporaneous that mutes the poetry, constricts the heart, chills the blood and trammels the flight of the imaginative artist—driving him either into the circumscription and delimitation of ‘realism’, or else into realms of fantastic ‘escape’. He is robustly independent of the pressure which drove Sidney into Arcadia, and Dekker to Alsatia. Like all great artists he was less susceptible to pitifulness in the concrete shape of rags and wretchedness, debt and beggary and disease, at his doors, than to the heart of pity. Where a writer like Galsworthy focuses his gaze too narrowly on Mrs Jones the charwoman, Shakespeare gets ‘pity’ itself—states the thing universally, as in Lear’s ‘Poor naked wretches!’...

From one point of view, therefore, we are right when we assert that the relation of Shakespeare to the manners and customs and topicalities of his age is matter for the editor of the annotated edition—the stuff of which examiners and examinations are made—of interest to the antiquary, but of little value to the lover of the plays. Maria is not more essentially herself when she compares Malvolio’s face, creased into a thousand wrinkles by his efforts to smile, to ‘the new map with the augmentation of the Indies’. It added vividness in its own day: but it adds

<sup>1</sup> By Peter Erondelle. For a modern edition see *The Elizabethan Home*, ed. M. St C. Byrne.

nothing to her character. If we leave it out nobody but the one person in a thousand who has seen the map, with its amazing rhumb lines, is any the poorer to-day. It is of little importance that Juliet's burial conforms to Italian and not English custom. It has nothing to do with any so-called Italian atmosphere. There are two reasons why she is borne to the church 'as the custom is' on an open bier. The first—Shakespeare found the detail in his source, Arthur Brooke's poem: the second—some such device was essential to the story.

When everything possible, however, has been urged against antiquarianism, the fact remains that every genuine student of Shakespeare, who wishes to come to grips with the thought of the plays and to realise to the full their complete dramatic values, needs, for this more thorough apprehension, some detailed knowledge of that particular social order which happens to be their general background. It is a fact that the organisation of life in Shakespeare's England differed considerably from ours to-day; and we must understand what these differences are, if we are to know his people as fully as possible, and appreciate the subtler points of their emotional relationships,<sup>1</sup> their behaviour and reactions to each other and to their circumstances. He will sacrifice verisimilitude to the requirements of drama, but throughout he takes for granted the social fabric of his age.

It follows, therefore, that the background of life in the plays is, and at the same time is not, the background of Elizabethan life. As an example—old Capulet is an admirable picture of a testy Elizabethan parent, and his behaviour to Juliet in the matter of the match with Paris reminds us instantly of the perpetually quoted account that Lady Jane Grey gives of her own noble father and mother. The human reality is faithfully portrayed, and at the same time the detail of the portrait is contemporary. If, however, we go on lightheartedly to assume that old Capulet in his behaviour as a 'nobleman' bears any resemblance to an Elizabethan noble of similar standing we shall be hopelessly misled. If we compare him with the genuine article

<sup>1</sup> As, for example, in Malvolio's overheard soliloquy, cf. *infra*, pp. 204, 210.

we realise at once that the intimate 'realistic', or Elizabethan, scenes in which he appears are purely 'romantic', or, if we prefer, untrue to the facts of contemporary noble life. Shakespeare may label Capulet the head of a noble household, who can treat Paris, 'a young Nobleman, Kinsman to the Prince', as his equal, and a proper match for his daughter; but when it comes to a scene like Act iv, Sc. iv, which shows the home life of this supposed nobleman, we realise that the setting is not Verona but Stratford, and that the most likely person to have sat for that very realistic portrait is John Shakespeare, or any of the good burgesses who were William's father's friends. They probably got in the way of all their busy servants and kitchen staff on the occasions of daughters' weddings: but it is quite certain that an Elizabethan nobleman, with his retinue of anything from twenty to eighty gentlemen officers, and from a hundred to five hundred yeomen servants, did not come into personal contact with Antony and Potpan, Peter and Angelica, and did not himself have to issue orders for the quenching of fires and the turning up of tables.<sup>1</sup> In these scenes Capulet is brother to Dekker's jolly shoemaker, Simon Eyre, not to Lord Burghley.

This Capulet instance may be a rather simple and obvious one, but it warns us quite effectively that it will not be safe to assume, on Shakespeare's evidence only, that his 'realistic' scenes can be accepted without question as Elizabethan. There are, indeed, two questions which, with their answers, form an inevitable preliminary to any general consideration of the relation of Shakespeare's plays to the life of Elizabethan England. The first is—does Shakespeare make deliberate differences between the life and manners of plays whose scene is set in England, and those whose scene is set either in some European or some imaginary country? The second is—does he differentiate between the life of his own day, and that of past ages? They are both plain questions with plain answers, but they are all too

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 206. But see also *De Maisse's Journal* (trans. Harrison and Jones) where Queen Elizabeth herself can be found giving orders for quenching a fire in the Privy Chamber.



frequently confused and complicated by being broken up into such themes as 'Shakespeare's anachronisms', his geographical knowledge, his possible or alleged travels, his knowledge of history, his use of local colour, etc.

Now there is no reason to suppose that Shakespeare got any more dramatic value out of accuracy and inaccuracy than any other dramatist, with a popular audience, in any age. In matters historical and geographical the delights of accuracy, and consequently of inaccuracy, are alike wasted upon the average audience. Whether ancient or Elizabethan, Roman, Venetian or English, the truth about Shakespeare's scenes is that they are all set in the theatre. I do not believe that Shakespeare ever bothered his own imagination or his audience's as to where, in *The Merchant of Venice*, an imaginary Venice ends and his own London begins. Nor can I believe that either he or they ever gave a thought to whether there were or should be differences between life at the Court of Cymbeline and at the Courts of Elsinore or Bohemia or Richard II. In relation to all misleading subdivisions of these questions there is only one simple issue for the dramatist—what 'corroborative detail' out of life, talk, books, will enable his imagined people to live more intensely and credibly for their hour upon the stage?

The dramatist's response to this problem is a twofold one. For the benefit of himself and the more sensitive members of his audience he has congruous allusion. It may mean nothing to the general, but mention of the Rialto and of Antonio's trading ventures gives depth and solidity to the figures of Antonio and Shylock, as Cotsall and 'a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford Fair' give body to Shallow and Silence. Infinitely more useful from a dramatic point of view, however, is familiar reference—the sweeping up into the body of the dialogue of the everyday realities of the Elizabethan background. Thus it is that clocks strike in ancient Rome, Roman Britain and Ephesus: Hector quotes Aristotle, and Pandarus talks of Friday and Sunday: the Ephesians conduct monetary transactions in ducats, marks and guilders, and ancient Britons and Romans dispute over a tribute of £3000. Thus it is that households in Illyria are staffed

on strictly Elizabethan lines: that we find the abbess of a nunnery in Ephesus, a nine men's morris in the wood near Athens, and Whitsun pastorals, the hobby horse and Christian burial in pagan Bohemia: that Claudius of Denmark is guarded, very inefficiently, by 'Switzers': and that Pandarus compares the soldiers who pass by after the incomparable Troilus to 'porridge after meat'.

It extends, of course, to his use of names. For the sake of congruity there are Antonios, Orsinos, Antipholuses and Leonatos. But the schoolmaster in Ephesus is called Pinch: Snug, Bottom and the other English mechanicals are found plying their trades in Athens: Elbow, Froth and Mistress Overdone inhabit not Southwark but the stews of Vienna: Dull, Costard and Moth have strayed beyond the Pyrenees to Navarre: Belch and Aguecheek cavort in Illyria: Dogberry and Verges keep the watch in Messina: even Coriolanus speaks of the Roman mob as 'Hob and Dick': and the Gobbos, who are well known in the parish registers of Titchfield—the home of the Earl of Southampton—turn up in Venice.

References to clothing and its accessories are, with a very few exceptions, definitely Elizabethan. Cleopatra has a 'lace' which Charmian has to cut: in the Rome of Coriolanus and the Athens of Timon they wear 'hats', and the conspirators in *Julius Caesar* have their hats pulled about their ears, while Cæsar himself 'plucks me ope his doublet'. According to Hamlet they wore the fashionable shoe-rosettes of James's Court at Elsinore, as well as the sixteenth-century chopine: they had new ribbons to their pumps in Athens for the performance of 'Pyramus and Thisbe': Poins wore peach-coloured silk stockings in the London of Henry IV: Falstaff ordered satin for an (Elizabethan) 'short cloak and slops', and thought Mistress Ford would look well in a 'semicircled farthingale', and Doll accused Pistol of tearing 'a poor whore's ruff in a bawdy house'. Chiron in *Titus Andronicus* wears the fashionable Elizabethan 'dancing rapier', the courtier's ornamental weapon; and Shakespeare gives the Tudor rapier to most of his other quarrelsome gentlemen, whether they live in fourteenth-century Verona, twelfth-century Denmark,

the turmoil of Yorkist-Lancastrian England, or the mediaeval England of Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V. The plundering Romans carry off from Corioli 'doublets that hangmen would bury with those that wore them'. The fashionable Elizabethan scented glove seems equally popular in pagan Bohemia, where Autolycus sells the yokels 'gloves as sweet as damask roses'; and in Troy Helen swears 'by Venus' glove', while Troilus throws his to Death as a challenge, and takes a glove from Cressida as a love token. In *Coriolanus* matrons sling their gloves to greet the victor of Corioli; and in *Timon of Athens* Alcibiades throws his glove to the senators in token of his friendly intentions.

Food and drink and furniture are all Elizabethan. They pick English wild flowers in the meadows of Bohemia, and English garden flowers in Perdita's rustic garden. Ophelia's flowers are English, as English as the brook with its slanting willow where she drowns herself: and Juliet's corpse is strewn with rosemary, like any properly coffined English maiden's. Titania sleeps on a bank of wild thyme, 'o'er-canopied' with English woodland flowers; and the gardeners in *Richard II* bind up that Tudor newcomer of fruits, the 'dangling apricocks'. And besides this lode of familiar allusion there are complete passages in the dialogue which serve the same purpose. Touchstone's disquisition on the degrees of a quarrel, Mercutio's anatomy of duelling, Hamlet's lecture on actors and acting, are all pure Elizabethan set pieces. Equally, if the talk is of games or dancing, hunting, hawking, bear-baiting, greyhound coursing, or other sport, reference and language are alike that of Shakespeare's own day.

The point of it all is—versimilitude, actuality. It is also the main point of such peculiarly Elizabethan sketches as Oswald, Osric and Parolles. We may dislike the last, think the second preposterous, and feel the first to be an alien in the world of *King Lear*: but they are all three accurate topical portraits, which must undoubtedly have made Shakespeare's own audience more at home in ancient Britain and at Elsinore. Shakespeare does not handle time and place directly: he translates them into terms of emotional atmosphere. His differentiation between ancient and modern times, and between English, foreign and

imagined realms, is not achieved by historical detail or local colour. The Venetian background of *The Merchant of Venice* is negligible, so far as local colour is concerned. It amounts to references to the Rialto, to a gondola and to the 'tranect' or common ferry, to Mantua and Padua and Rome. But if these things are negligible, the emotional atmosphere of Renaissance culture in which the play is set is all-important. The grace, the dignity, and the sweet gravity of the verse, translate the characters from the London-Venice of their creation into that scene of timeless abstraction which is Renaissance feeling.

It is more or less the same with *Cymbeline*, which is not so much given a setting as made decorative in the Renaissance manner. Nominally the scene is Roman Britain and Rome; but Posthumus is a 'gentleman of the bedchamber' to a king who was 'knighted' by Augustus Caesar, and when he leaves for Rome he waves farewell with glove and hat and handkerchief. Imogen packs the 'doublet and hose' for her disguise in a 'cloak-bag', invents for herself a dead master, 'a very valiant Briton' called 'Richard du Champ', and takes service as a 'page' with Caius Lucius. Imagery and oaths have a slight classical flavour; and the atmosphere suggested is that of antiquity as conceived by the Renaissance<sup>1</sup>—left on record in their paintings of classical subjects, and recently in our own time translated on the stage into the visual realities of costume and setting by the Compagnie

<sup>1</sup> The illustrations of the 1577 edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles* should help the student to appreciate this point. A set of some dozen or more 'portraits', in fancy dress, has to be repeated until it has done duty for most of the monarchs from Brute to Harold. Leir, for example, is dressed in the usual Renaissance version of a Roman *lorica* and helmet (cf. the Peacham illustration of *Titus Andronicus*, reproduced in Chambers's *Shakespeare*, I, 312), and his effigy afterwards reappears for Julius Frontinus and Placidius. Duncan is also dressed Roman, though Macbeth and Banquo meeting the Weird Sisters ride as middle-aged Elizabethan gentlemen of sober but good taste and habit. Brute 'kills his father by misfortune' attired in the hunting costume of an Elizabethan gentleman (cf. Turbervile's *Noble arte of venere or hunting*, 1575) and the same picture afterwards does duty for the slaying of William Rufus. But if Brute turns parricide in Elizabethan garments (p. 10), on the next page he adjusts matters by changing into a reasonably correct Roman tunic and armour to pursue his similarly clad Trojan enemies into a river—which latter plate serves then on p. 440 to illustrate a Scottish battle of 1529. More or less genuine Britons fight adequate (Renaissance) Romans at p. 123, and really good Romans win the battle of Tewkesbury.

des Quinze for their production of the *Viol de Lucrece*. In sum, neither accuracy nor inaccuracy flaws the atmosphere in which Shakespeare means a play to have its being. In *King Lear* Kent is put in the stocks, Edmund is a sixteenth-century Italianate villain, and paper, holy water, the French disease, Bedlam beggars, etc., are Elizabethan actualities: but not all the Elizabethanism in the world can temper the play's ancient savagery with a contemporary civility. It is a savagery of primitive spirit and primitive passion, not of archaism.

A rapid summary of this kind is in no sense exhaustive, but it serves, at least, to establish a general answer to these general questions concerning the life, manners and scene of the plays. The scene is the stage, and the idiom of life contemporary. With the ground thus cleared only one further warning is necessary. In the following pages an attempt will be made to determine the social standing and the social relationships of certain typical individuals in the plays; but it cannot be too emphatically stated that the greatest circumspection must be used before further attempts are made to base upon the material thus collected for a special purpose general assumptions about Shakespeare's knowledge and ignorance. Shakespeare is not a document: he is a dramatist. We may think it probable that when he drew old Capulet he did not know what life in a noble household was like; but we do not know this for a fact. Every student should take the Folio's list of *dramatis personae* in *Othello* as a significant warning. In it Iago is described as 'a Villaine', Cassio as 'an Honourable Lieutenant', Desdemona as 'Wife to Othello', and Emilia as 'Wife to Iago'. Here is dramatic and artistic truth; and if, after studying carefully the text of this or any other of the plays and what we know of Elizabethan life, we are still in doubt as to the exact social status of Iago and Emilia or any other character, the only assumption warranted is not one concerning Shakespeare's knowledge and experience, but simply that it does not matter to us, as it did not matter to the dramatist.

In so far as the detail of Elizabethan life and custom differs from the modern, reference to a good annotated edition, or to

*Shakespeare's England*, will generally clear up most difficulties. Nor need we concern ourselves here with his presentation of 'the people', or of ordinary burgess households in which the social relationships—including that of master and servant—are simple and comprehensible. In *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *The Taming of the Shrew* (setting aside the Induction to the last), we have only to deal with the relations between gentlemen, burgesses, work-people, and servants of the yeoman class, all of which are very much as they might be to-day, allowing for a little more exuberance and general heartiness all round. At the same time their 'contemporary' quality has been affirmed and demonstrated often enough to allow us to accept Shakespeare's picture without further question. But for the greater number of the plays, which are set in the Courts and households of kings, nobles and petty princes, the commentators as a whole have given us so little help that there is not in existence any one composite and documented account of this aspect of the Elizabethan background to which the student can be referred. To understand the circumstances and relationships of regal and noble life we have to investigate a social order of which we know very little to-day—an order in which the 'servants' or 'serving-men' are 'the Duke's son preferred page to the Prince, the Earl's second son attendant upon the Duke, the Knight's second son the Earl's servant, the Esquire's son to wear the Knight's livery, and the Gentleman's son the Esquire's serving-man'.<sup>1</sup> We are faced with the task of disentangling Elizabethan and modern notions of 'service', and in consequence we cannot afford to start with the plays themselves. Shakespeare is not a document: and we must establish the facts before we are entitled to question the authenticity of old Capulet's portrait, or to follow up similar investigations into the 'reality' or accuracy of Shakespeare's rendering of this extremely important aspect of contemporary life.

By 'the Court' was meant at once Elizabeth's house, her household, and the seat of government. All the important noblemen of the realm were in attendance at Court for a large part of the year, and the organisation of the household was an extra-

<sup>1</sup> *A Health to the Gentlemanly Profession of Serving Men*, by J. M. (1598).

ordinarily elaborate and complicated affair. The best and most complete account of it is to be found in E. K. Chambers's *Elizabethan Stage* (vol. 1). All that can be attempted here is an indication of those aspects and details of Court life and ceremony which are relevant to the study of Shakespeare's plays.

The first thing to realise is that access to the sovereign—except for those in personal attendance—was extremely difficult. It is generally allowed that anyone who had the right to come to Court had the right of access to the Presence Chamber;<sup>1</sup> but if their desire was to speak to the Queen they were as far to seek as ever, unless they could obtain the grant of an audience. We are more accustomed to the amiable and picturesque anecdotes of Elizabeth on progress and on public occasions, staging herself with inimitable glamour and effect as the 'mere English' monarch in the bluff King Hal tradition, whom the meanest of her subjects might approach. But it is very necessary to balance this impression by reading some such account as the one given us by Rowland Whyte<sup>2</sup> of the denials, rebuffs and heart-breaking delays which kept even such great ladies as the kinsfolk and friends of the Earl of Essex from gaining access to the Queen, in order to plead his cause during the period of his disgrace. From Whyte's letters we can also realise not only this jealously guarded privacy of the monarch, but also the elaborate ceremonial with which it was preserved, and the impressiveness that was attached even to the actual progress through the palace of anyone fortunate enough to secure an audience. When the Dutch ambassador, Vereiken, was received in 1600 he was met officially at the gate of the palace, and taken to the Hall. From thence he was conducted through the Council Chamber to the

<sup>1</sup> See *Ordinances*: Household of Charles II: 'All persons of gentlemen of quality and of good fashion, and the gentlemen that attend our great officers and privy counsellors and persons of good quality are permitted to come and remain in the said chamber, and all wives and daughters of the nobility and their women that attend them, may pass through this chamber, and all other ladies of good rank and quality, but not their servants'. The ordinances for the Queen's Privy Chamber in 1627 declare that no one under the degree of a baroness can be admitted, 'unless sworn of the chamber'.

<sup>2</sup> A. Collins *Letters and Memorials of State*, II, letters of 4 Nov., 29 Nov., 8 Dec. 1599; 3 Mar. 1600; etc.

Great Chamber, which was 'full of ladies and gentlemen' and the guard. He then passed through the Presence Chamber, 'full of great ladies' and 'the fair Maids, attired all in white', from which he was led to the Privy Chamber, where all the Ladies of the Privy Chamber were assembled. Finally he was received by the Queen in the Withdrawing Chamber, in the presence of all the Lords of the Privy Council, and, to complete the effect, 'his followers were suffered to enter in with him'.<sup>1</sup>

The personal attendants of the monarch were the Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber. Henry VIII had eighteen such gentlemen, six of whom were in attendance at once, with two Gentlemen-Ushers and four Grooms of the Chamber to assist them. They were the only persons who were allowed to help the King to dress. His doublet, hose and shoes were brought to the door of the Privy Chamber by the Yeoman of the Wardrobe, where they were taken by the grooms, who, with the ushers, enjoyed the privilege of warming the clothes before they handed them to the gentlemen. Every night the grooms made up pallet beds in the Privy Chamber for two of the gentlemen who were required to sleep there. During the day they had at all times to remain in the Privy Chamber. They were allowed to amuse the tedium of waiting by 'honest and moderate' card-play, dicing, chess and tables, from which they had to desist at once as soon as they were warned of the King's approach.<sup>2</sup>

Under Elizabeth these eighteen gentlemen were retained, but their duties of personal attendance naturally devolved upon the Ladies or Gentlewomen of the Bedchamber and the Privy Chamber, while the housemaid work of the grooms was carried out by four 'chamberers' or chambermaids. Apparently three Ladies of the Bedchamber and five of the Privy Chamber were in attendance at once.<sup>3</sup> There was, of course, tremendous competition for these posts. Not only were the fees good—the gentlemen received £50 and the ladies £33. 6s. 8d. per annum—but the lucky holders came in for other valuable rewards of service, such

<sup>1</sup> A. Collins, *Letters and Memorials of State*, II, 170.

<sup>2</sup> *Ordnances for the Household made at Eltham*, 1526.

<sup>3</sup> Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. I, citing Lansdowne MSS. LIX, f. 43.



as the reversion of profitable leases, and sometimes even large gifts of money.<sup>1</sup> According to one list the total personnel of the Privy Chamber consisted of the Lord Chamberlain, the Vice-Chamberlain, four Knights, the Knight-Marshal, eighteen Gentlemen, four Gentlemen-Ushers, the Groom-Porter, fourteen Grooms, four Carvers, three Cupbearers, four Sewers, four Squires to the Body, four Yeomen-Ushers, four Pages, four Messengers, two Clerks of the Closet,<sup>2</sup> and the Ladies already mentioned. Elizabeth also followed the custom of her sister and of her father's queens in having always in attendance the famous Maids of Honour—six young women of noble or gentle birth, in charge of an older lady known as the Mother of the Maids. Chambers states that the maids did not receive any salary, but in Henry VIII's time at any rate they were paid £10, in addition to their board and lodging.<sup>3</sup> With the kitchen and all the provisioning offices, the wardrobe, the stable, and the rest we need not concern ourselves, but mention should be made of the Gentlemen Pensioners and the Guard. The Pensioners,<sup>4</sup> carrying their gilt battle-axes, formed a guard of honour which escorted the Queen on most occasions. The Guard was the palace guard,<sup>5</sup> whose uniform is still familiar to us as that worn by the 'beefeaters' of the Tower.

The etiquette and ceremonial complications of regal life find but little reflection in the plays. What Shakespeare either did not know, or else deliberately rejected for dramatic purposes, was the circumstance and order of life in a royal household. By ignorance or by design—more probably a mixture of both—he has given us a romantic picture. It was natural that he should seize upon as apt for dramatic purposes the popular aspect of royalty,<sup>6</sup> with which Elizabeth's subjects were well acquainted: Shakespeare and his Queen both possessed a superb sense of the

<sup>1</sup> See especially Calendars of State Papers (Domestic) for the whole reign. For example, in 1594, Lady Scudamore, Gentlewoman of the Bedchamber, received £300 as the Queen's free gift (S.P.O. Dom. 1594, (CXLVIII, May 31st).

<sup>2</sup> Printed in Peck, *Desiderata Curiosa*, and *Ordinances*.

<sup>3</sup> See below, pp. 207-8.

<sup>4</sup> Under Elizabeth this establishment numbered 50.

<sup>5</sup> 100 ordinary yeomen, and 50 extraordinary.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. *Theseus with the 'mechanicals'*, Henry V both as Prince and King.

theatre. What is surprising, however, is that he should so entirely neglect the dramatic opportunities offered by the intimate-formal routine of Court life, had he been acquainted with it. *Henry VIII*, in which we must allow for the collaboration of Fletcher, is the only play which exploits it in any way, though the natural dramatic value of this carefully staged remoteness and inaccessibility is enormous.

But Shakespeare will have none of it. Court life in the plays is definitely a homely affair in comparison with Court life at Whitehall. It is accurately Elizabethan—that is, true to the architectural reality of any great Elizabethan house—to take Hamlet through the King's chamber in order to reach his mother's closet; but no monarch at his prayers would ever have been left so (theatrically) unprotected as Claudius. In the circumstances of complete distrust which Hamlet creates for himself by the 'Mouse-trap' play he could not have progressed so far through antechambers and presence chambers without some announcement from the grooms of the Chamber, the gentlemen-ushers, and the gentlemen of the Privy Chamber, let alone the guard! In fact—as Claudius remarked later—'Where are my Switzers?' The Tudors knew a great deal about the divinity that hedged kings, but they took care to reinforce it with normal precautions. The danger of assassination was ever present. We come back to reality in Act iv, Sc. v, when Ophelia is not able to obtain access to the Queen until permission is given and she is brought in by a gentleman-in-waiting.

In general, the way in which anyone in the plays can obtain access to the monarch is a matter of theatrical licence. Messengers should not burst into the royal presence without being announced by gentlemen-ushers. But they rush in gaily in *Cymbeline* (II, ii), in *Hamlet* (IV, vii), in *Antony and Cleopatra* (II, v), in *Richard III* (II, iv), and *Henry I* (II, iv), when no particular dramatic purpose save economy is thereby served. In *Richard II* Aumerle—a man already suspect—rushes wildly into the presence (v, iii), to be pursued to the door a moment later, first by his father, and then by his mother, both of whom shout and clamour for admission until the King unlocks the door. The reasonable stage

version of actuality can be seen in *Henry VIII* (III, i), where a gentleman enters to Queen Katharine to crave admission for Wolsey and Cardinal Campeius, who 'wait in the presence', 'great cardinals' as they are. When in Act IV, Sc. ii, divorced and dying, she is burst in upon by a messenger, real dramatic purpose is served by this violation of the decencies:

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Mess.* An't like your Grace—

*Kath.* You are a saucy fellow:

Deserve we no more reverence?

*Grif.* You are to blame,

Knowing she will not lose her wonted greatness,

To use so rude behaviour; go to, kneel.

In the presentation of regal and noble life Shakespeare bends actuality to his purpose how and when he pleases. His handling of murder is an instance of this. Assassination or the murder of a king in the sixteenth century simply could not be carried out privately, unless it was done by poison.<sup>1</sup> To attack the victim unexpectedly on some public occasion was the only way. We have only to look at all the famous murders of the time to realise this—Henry III of France, Henry of Navarre, the Guise, William the Silent, the Regent Moray, even a simple person like Rizzio. All took place in circumstances of the utmost publicity. When it suits him to do so Shakespeare keeps close to contemporary practice, as in the murder of Claudius: the last scene of *Hamlet* is admirably and accurately contrived. Infinitely the most impressive of all his murder scenes, however, is the murder of Duncan, which is almost completely 'romantic' in its disregard of contemporary circumstance.

Lady Macbeth does her best to provide 'corroborative detail' by explaining how she has drugged the two chamberlains or grooms of Duncan's chamber, so that he sleeps unguarded. That these so-called grooms should have been gentlemen-in-waiting, of the same standing as Macduff, is unimportant.<sup>2</sup> What Mac-

<sup>1</sup> Even poison was a matter of extreme difficulty. Royal and noble food was still 'tasted'. See also G. B. Harrison, *Second Elizabethan Journal*, pp. 320-2 for an account of a plan to kill Elizabeth by poisoning the pommel of her saddle.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 198 and *infra*, pp. 203, 205-6, 215-17.

beth and his lady would, in reality, have found extraordinarily difficult, would be to get rid of their own ladies and gentlemen-in-waiting and their own grooms, without first going through the ceremony of going to bed.<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare compromises by providing Macbeth with one servant, whom he dismisses—

Go, bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready  
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.<sup>2</sup>

One servant is a reasonable dramatic symbol for attendance, but unless we dismiss with him all 'realistic' criteria we must remember that—to take only one instance—Lady Macbeth would have found it practically impossible to escape the observation of that extremely alert waiting-gentlewoman of Act v, Sc. i, not to mention the various grooms who would have had to stay up to quench fires and lights and lock up after all the waiting-gentlewomen and gentlemen had gone to bed. It is all very well for Lady Macbeth to tell her husband

Get on your night-gown, lest occasion call us,  
And show us to be watchers;

but actually the nightgown—which was a dressing-gown or robe—would have been in the care of the Yeoman of the Wardrobe, and when required would have been handed to a gentleman-in-waiting who would have helped his lord to put it on. Macbeth would probably have had no idea where to find his nightgown for himself. Even in a modern household that is well maided and valeted it is often impossible to find a garment without ringing for the servant who gives personal attendance—attendance which still means constant surveillance and attention, but which is absolutely negligible in comparison with what would have been found in any Elizabethan nobleman's household. In fact, if a sixteenth-century monarch is to be privately murdered by a nobleman, circumstances such as those arranged for Evadne in *The Maides Tragedy* are practically the only possibility, if the dramatist is to be forced to consider the 'realities' of everyday life.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 205–6.

The household of an Elizabethan nobleman was organised on the same lines as the Court, though on a somewhat smaller scale. The number of gentlemen-in-waiting and of yeoman servants would naturally vary according to the means of the individual and the state which he desired to keep, but the household officers and the conditions of service were the same in large or small establishments. At the head of every household was the Steward, who was responsible to the master or mistress for the general conduct of affairs, for the provisioning, for keeping an eye on the necessary repairs all over the estate, for the payment of wages, the overlooking of all departmental accounts, and the discipline of the staff. Associated with him as a rule, but of subsidiary importance, were the Comptroller and the Treasurer or Cofferer. In a group by themselves came such persons as Secretaries, Schoolmasters and Chaplains; and in another people whose employment was not strictly within the household, such as a High Steward of Courts, an Auditor, a Receiver-General and a Solicitor—any or all of whom might be needed by a nobleman with large estates to administer. A Master or Gentleman of the Horses was usual in most households, and the rest of the gentlemen-servingmen were as a rule grouped as Gentlemen-Ushers, Sewers, Carvers, Gentlemen of the Chamber and Gentlemen-in-Waiting or Gentlemen Waiters. Beneath all these were the yeomen servants and the grooms belonging to all the different offices, such as ewry, pantry, bakehouse, cellar, kitchen, wardrobe, stables. The laundry was generally staffed by women, and the immediate attendants of the ladies of the household were waiting-gentlewomen and chamberers or chambermaids.

In most noble households in Tudor times the greater number of these gentlemen servants were gentlemen by birth. Many of them possessed independent means, and were the owners of or heirs to estates. It is said of Burghley that 'most of the principal gentlemen in England sought to prefer their sons and heirs to his service', and that he had 'attending on his table' twenty gentlemen, each of whom had £1000 a year 'in possession and reversion'.<sup>1</sup> The treasurer of the Household to Edward Earl of

<sup>1</sup> Peck, *Desiderata Curiosa*, I, 24, 1779.

Derby, who died in 1572, was a knight, Sir Richard Shierborn:<sup>1</sup> the House Steward of Gilbert Talbot, seventh Earl of Shrewsbury, who died in 1592, had previously been senior Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge.<sup>2</sup> The Steward of the fifth Earl of Northumberland, in Henry VIII's time, had three personal servants to attend on him.<sup>3</sup> The Steward of the Earl of Derby ruled an establishment of eighty gentlemen and five hundred yeomen.<sup>2</sup> The Steward of even the most modest household, such as that of Katharine Willoughby, Dowager Duchess of Suffolk, would have at least eighty to a hundred persons in his charge.<sup>4</sup>

From such facts as these it is easy to see that an Elizabethan household steward was a gentleman of considerable importance, occupying a very responsible position, which gave him the exercise of very considerable power, and must probably have called for much discretion and tact. Anthony Browne, second Viscount Montague, in his *Booke of Orders and Rules*<sup>5</sup> for the conduct of his household at Cowdray, gives us a detailed account of the duties of all his servants, and is particularly interesting on the subject of his Steward. The Steward was the chief officer in the house. He dined and supped in the great hall, seated in the place of honour, at his own table, 'and that always in a gown, unless he be booted'. His instructions were, not to 'give place unto any'; and gentlemen strangers who were entertained at the castle ate at his table. The preservation of discipline was in his hands, and the Viscount writes:

I will that in civil sort he do reprehend and correct the negligent and disordered persons, and reform them by his grave admonitions and vigilant eye over them, the riotous, the contentious, and quarrelous persons of any degree... the frequenters of tabling, carding, and dicing in corners and at untimely hours and seasons... The incorrigible persons and willful maintainers of their outrageous misgovernment and unsufferable disorders... whom neither his persuasions, reason itself, nor authority can contain within the limit of their duty: of

<sup>1</sup> J. Nichols, *Illustrations of the Manners and Expences of Antient Times*, 1797.

<sup>2</sup> Calendar S.P.O. Dom. 1591-4, CCXL, 174.

<sup>3</sup> *The Earl of Northumberland's Household Book*, ed. Bishop Percy, 1770.

<sup>4</sup> *Historical MSS. Commission, Earl of Arundel's MSS.* p. 459.

<sup>5</sup> *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, vol. VII.

them I will that he give me information, and leave them and their cause to mine own consideration.

The Viscount had his rules read aloud to the assembled household once a year 'about the audit time'. In view of *Twelfth Night* (II, iii, 95 ff.) one might almost imagine that Malvolio or his creator had somehow managed to be present on one such occasion!<sup>1</sup>

The Viscount's Gentleman-Usher seems to have been directly responsible, under the Steward, for the detailed organisation of the work and duties of both the gentlemen and the yeomen servitors; or, as the Viscount has it, 'He shall have authority, in civil and kind manner, to command any gentleman or yeoman to do any service that shall be for mine honour'. It was his business to appoint his lordship's carvers and sewers from among the number of his gentlemen, to attend upon visitors in the morning and make all arrangements for their comfort, and to wait upon the Viscount at dinner—'wait', that is to say, in the general sense of overseeing the details of the service. He was commanded, for example, to see that no waiter was allowed 'to carry a dish or attend at my table in doublet and hose only, without either coat, cloak, or some upper garment'.<sup>2</sup>

The Gentlemen of the Chamber attended to the Viscount's personal wants when he rose in the morning and when he went

<sup>1</sup> Those who like to believe that Shakespeare drew from the life may be interested in the following 'possible' connexion between him and this particular document. The dedicatee of *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594), as well, probably, as the beloved youth of the *Sonnets*, was Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton. He was born in 1573, and succeeded to the earldom in 1581. His mother was Mary Browne, daughter of the first Viscount Montague. Anthony Browne, born in 1574 (four months later than Southampton), who succeeded his grandfather as second Viscount in 1592, was therefore his first cousin. We have no evidence as to the degree of intimacy that existed between them, but we know that Anthony was brought up at Cowdray, and that Southampton stayed there with his grandfather from time to time. It was quite near to his own home, Titchfield. The old Viscount took a considerable interest in the affairs of his elder grandson, and it is likely that the cousins saw a good deal of each other in childhood and youth. While accepting implicitly the machinery and order of life with which the 'Rules' deal, it is not difficult to imagine that the young Earl might have been amused by the somewhat pompous and self-conscious 'Booke', as written up by his junior in 1595, at the age of twenty-one!

<sup>2</sup> A detailed description of the ceremony of the serving of the Viscount's dinner can be found in the present writer's *Elizabethan Life*, pp. 31, 32.

to bed. The senior amongst them waited upon his 'trencher and cup, at dinner and supper', and acted as a personal attendant wherever he went. The Gentlemen-in-Waiting attended the Viscount and his wife whenever they 'walked abroad', and arranged amongst themselves so that a sufficient number of them were always in attendance in the Great Chamber by 10 a.m. When required by the Gentleman-Usher to do so they acted as valets to guests staying in the house, and in the order of precedence took their place after the Gentlemen of the Horse, who in their turn took place after the Gentlemen of the Chamber.

The Yeoman-Usher was in charge of the Grooms of the Chamber and the Yeomen of the Chamber. He saw to it that they kept the Great Chamber and the dining chambers clean and tidy; and, under the Gentleman-Usher, supervised the serving of the meals. The Yeomen of the Chamber were responsible for the keeping and the proper care of the Viscount's apparel, linen, robes and jewels. They slept in the withdrawing chamber, adjoining the bedchamber, so as to be at hand if required. They brushed carpets, laid fires, and prepared, brushed and laid out the Viscount's wearing apparel for the day. They made the Viscount's bed, and did all necessary housemaid's work. Unlike the housemaid, however, they were also required to attend upon the Viscount when he walked in the park, 'one to carry my cloak; the rest to do mine errands, to take up and make clean my bowls, and the like'. The Grooms did all servants' work in the Great Chamber, such as making the fires, and fetching drink for the meals. The Yeomen of the Chamber, however, were responsible at night for seeing to the quenching of fires and lights and for locking up after everyone had gone to bed.<sup>1</sup>

Even when it is possible to discover the actual names of people who occupied positions in noble Elizabethan households it is generally very difficult to find out anything about them. In consequence, it is almost impossible to be definite and precise as to the exact social standing of a steward or a waiting-gentlewoman

<sup>1</sup> For further details see Note A, p. 215.



or a gentleman-in-waiting. In general we should be right to expect such persons to be of gentle birth, and in the cases of waiting-gentlemen and gentlewomen sometimes of the same social status as their employers. The theory of service was that those of gentle birth were served personally by men and women also of gentle birth. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, it is probable that conditions were slightly different from what they had been a hundred years earlier, and that there were more waiting-gentlemen and gentlewomen who were 'gentle' only by virtue of their office than there had been in earlier Tudor times. The old idea was that the proper places for 'goodman Tomson's Jack, or Robin Rush, my gaffer Russetcoat's second son' were 'the one holding the plough, the other whipping the carthorse'; but by 1598 J. M. is complaining that the 'Gentlemanly Profession of Serving Men' is being invaded by these farmers' sons and others of the same class, so that service is no longer the honourable calling it was, and that the real 'gentleman' servant is often hard put to it to secure employment. It is, of course, literary evidence, and must not be too liberally interpreted; but we are probably right to take it as a warning that during Shakespeare's lifetime, the range of birth, means, breeding and character, within this class technically described as 'gentle', may have been considerable.

A few examples will help to illustrate the situation. They belong to the period twenty-five years previous to the birth of Shakespeare, but I believe they are typical for the whole of the century. Honor Grenville—a daughter of the family rendered illustrious by the Elizabethan Sir Richard, amongst others—became by her first marriage the third wife of Sir John Basset of Umberleigh in Devon. Three of her seven children were Anne, Katherine and Phillippa, to each of whom Sir John left a marriage dowry and £3. 16s. 4d. a year 'for their sufficient finding'.<sup>1</sup> As her second husband Honor married Arthur Plantagenet, Lord Lisle, a natural son of Edward IV, who held various important positions under Henry VIII. In 1537 she managed to secure for Anne the position of maid of honour to Queen Jane Seymour, which carried with it £10 a year in wages

<sup>1</sup> M. A. E. Wood, *Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies*, II, 76.

and board and lodging at Court. Anne had to provide her own servant, also the dresses that the Queen considered suitable. Amongst her companions, later in her career, was that poor relation of the Norfolk family, Katherine Howard, who eventually became Henry's fifth queen.<sup>1</sup>

Mistress Katherine Basset had to be content with a less exalted position. Honor's niece by marriage, the Countess of Sussex, one of the Queen's gentlewomen, could not take her into her chamber while she was at Court, 'as she has three women already, which is one more than she is allowed'. She was, however, taken into the household of the Countess of Rutland, another friend of Honor's, who was also a gentlewoman to the Queen. Here she was obviously singled out and treated as a companion by the Countess, but that her normal position in such a household would have been that of a waiting-gentlewoman is obvious from a letter written to Lady Lisle by John Hussey. Lady Lisle had planned that Katherine should go to the household of the Countess of Hertford, and the Earl wrote to say that she would be as welcome to him and his wife as one of his own daughters. Hussey, however, wrote 'I see she is unwilling to leave my lady Rutland, lest being with Lady Hertford *she should be taken but as her woman*, for Lady Rutland does not so use her'. Eventually Katherine became a maid of honour to Anne of Cleves, so that her story throws considerable light upon the position of 'gentlewoman' in a noble house.<sup>2</sup>

With a certain number of facts thus established, on documentary and not literary evidence, we can now return to those of the plays which are set amidst the circumstances of noble life. That Shakespeare's personal knowledge of the life and detail of a noble household grew with the years and by opportunity seems evident. In *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet* he portrays vividly enough the young gallant, for whom Southampton and any of his intimates may stand as originals. Mer-

<sup>1</sup> For these and most of the following details see James Gardner, *Letters and Papers*, vols. for 1537-9.

<sup>2</sup> See Note B on p. 217.

cutio, Romeo, Benvolio, Paris, Tybalt, Biron and the rest are just such gay, witty, hot-tempered, assured young fellows as the typical young nobleman of the day. Old Capulet (*circa* 1591-5) is not just such another figure as the older nobleman, who would most certainly not have been able to tell one of his grooms where to find drier logs for the fire. Leonato of *Much Ado about Nothing* (*circa* 1599) will, however, pass very creditably for what he is—a noble gentleman who can receive the Prince in his house, and can wed his daughter Hero to the Prince's intimate friend, Count Claudio. It is noticeable that on the occasion of this later wedding, in a wifeless household, Leonato does not figure in any such scenes as those in which Capulet so incongruously strayed towards the kitchen. Even when he is shown in contact with Dogberry and Verges, he leaves to them the business of examining the men they have apprehended. Domestic realism is confined to where it properly belongs—the scenes between Hero and Beatrice and their waiting-gentlewomen.

In spite of Charles Lamb and Mr William Poel<sup>1</sup> *Twelfth Night* has in the past frequently suffered by reason of a fairly general ignorance of that aspect of Elizabethan life which is mirrored in its underplot. That neither stage nor study has as yet completely escaped from the bad old tradition is suggested by the examination candidate who wrote 'Malvolio was the clown in *Twelfth Night*, and Maria, who was the maid, along with the other menservants who were nearly always drunk, decided to play a trick on him'. There is still a tendency to regard the former as a fantastic stage butler, and the latter as a cheeky modern lady's maid, with the servants' hall as the setting. In point of fact, however, Olivia's household is one of the most accurately Elizabethan pictures of a noble household that Shakespeare has drawn.

<sup>1</sup> Lamb in his essay *On some of the Old Actors* pointed out that 'We must not confound him [Malvolio] with the eternal old, low steward of comedy. He is master of the household to a great princess: a dignity probably conferred on him for other respects than age or length of service'. But the whole essay should be carefully studied.

Mr Poel has continually, both in precept and by practice, emphasised this and other points which are vitally affected by knowledge of the social background of the age.

Olivia is a Countess, of rank to marry with the ruler of Illyria, Orsino, who is described alternatively as Duke and Count. For a contemporary parallel we might perhaps fix upon a Tudor gentlewoman, who died in 1580, but who was famous in ballad and play and in people's memory until a much later date. The lady in question was Katharine Willoughby, a descendant of the old nobility, who married as her first husband Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, whose third wife had been Mary Tudor, sister of Henry VIII and widow of Louis XII of France. In 1560-2, when living quietly in the country at Grimsthorpe in Lincolnshire,<sup>1</sup> her household—apart from her own family—consisted of some eighty persons, including a Steward, a Comptroller, a Cofferer, a Master of the Horses, three Gentlemen-Ushers, seven Gentlemen-Waiters, and all the usual yeomen and women servants. Olivia's background is just such a household. 'Who of my people', she asks, 'hold Viola in delay?' Malvolio in his day-dream imagines himself summoning her 'officers' about him as if they were his own. Some of her people, Olivia directs, are to have a special care of Malvolio in his supposed madness. Malvolio is just such another careful, grave and dignified gentleman as Viscount Montague's Ideal Steward. Maria is a shrewd, lively and well-educated gentlewoman, who can write as fair a hand as her lady's, and who marries her lady's kinsman when everybody sobers down to normal.<sup>2</sup> Unless we have in our minds some such conception of the decent and well-conditioned household that Shakespeare's audience knew as the reality, we miss half the subtlety—the humour of the topsy-turveydom of *Twelfth Night* licence introduced into ordinary life. To get the real and deliciously contrived contrapuntal melody of the piece it is essential to let the underplot move to the *Twelfth Night* tune of the madness of *Misrule*, while the sentimental theme threads its way through

<sup>1</sup> See *Hist. MSS. Comm., Earl of Arundel's MSS.*

<sup>2</sup> I do not think we ought to take Sir Toby's description of Maria as 'my niece's chambermaid' literally—meaning what the Elizabethans usually term a 'chamberer'. It would have been quite obvious from her dress that she was *not* a chamberer, so I can only suppose it was more or less equivalent to calling someone's private secretary 'chief cook and bottle washer'.

a lunacy of love. But the play loses if the underplot merely clowns its way along, in the wake of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. The fantastic fun that as a rule we extract from the gulling of Malvolio gets an abrupt shock at his final exit. There is sharper comedy, more in keeping with that troublesome exit, if we realise that, in Elizabethan fact, the gulling of Malvolio hovers perpetually on the brink of reason, the verge of reality. Katharine Willoughby, Dowager Duchess of Suffolk, married as her second husband Richard Bertie, her Gentleman-Usher! She was one of the romantic figures of the age, and the story of her life was as widely known as Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*—second only to the Bible in its popularity—could make it. Her step-daughter, Frances Duchess of Suffolk, married her Groom of the Chamber, Adrian Stokes; and Lady Mary Grey—daughter of Frances, and step-granddaughter of Katharine—who stood in the direct succession to the throne, actually married the Queen's Sergeant-Porter. 'There is example for it: the lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe.'

Maria brings us at once to the consideration of Shakespeare's waiting-gentlewomen,<sup>1</sup> and the question, Are they the ladies of gentle birth that we should expect to find in such positions? Is Maria of the same social standing as Katherine Basset? Are Maria, Helena of *All's Well that Ends Well*, Nerissa, Emilia, Margaret and Ursula of *Much Ado about Nothing*, all of the same social standing as Anne Boleyn, 'a Knight's daughter', who is waiting-gentlewoman to Queen Katharine in *Henry VIII*? Instinctively, I believe, we put Anne Boleyn and Helena in a class apart, and group the others with such figures as Charmian and Iras, Lucetta, and the unnamed gentlewoman attending on Lady Macbeth, as 'not quite ladies'. This is probably quite wrong and illogical, and is also probably based on ignorance of Elizabethan conditions and a resultant faulty stage tradition.

If we can free our conception of Maria from the twist that stage practice has given to it, we realise that there is nothing in

<sup>1</sup> For a vivid description of some of the duties and of any morning in the life of any waiting-gentlewoman, see Erondelle's *French Garden*, pp. 59-65 of *The Elizabethan Home* (2nd ed. 1930).

the text of the play to impugn her gentility. From the outset she treats Sir Toby and Sir Andrew as her equals, nor is there anything in her behaviour to justify us in considering her as belonging to a different class from Helena. She is sharp-tongued, witty, and high-spirited: Helena's is a sweeter, graver, deeper nature. If Maria is to be condemned as low-life comic-relief, simply because she assists in the practical joke, Sir Toby and Sir Andrew must share her fate. If we dislike the familiar tone of her conversation with the knights, what are we to say of Helena and her conversation with Parolles (*All's Well that Ends Well*, I, i, 118 ff.)? But we accept Helena without question as a gentlewoman; and the Countess of Rousillon treats her as a daughter, as a favoured gentlewoman like Katherine Basset was treated. In fact, to differentiate between Maria and Helena in the matter of social standing and dress is illogical. The real difference is one of character.

This, I believe, is also true of Nerissa, Margaret, and Ursula, and even of Emilia, who is the most difficult case of all. The text gives definite indications, Cassio describing her as 'the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife'. Cassio, Iago and Roderigo are all apparently social equals and 'gentlemen'. It would certainly not be safe to argue that because Bardolph is the only other Lieutenant, and Pistol the only other Ancient or Ensign drawn by Shakespeare, that therefore Cassio and Iago cannot be gentlemen. Emilia's duties as a waiting-gentlewoman are all quite in order. She helps Desdemona to undress, puts her things away, gives her her 'nightly wearing', and is requested

Prithee to-night  
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets.

It is perfectly correct for her not to dine with her mistress (*Othello*, III, iii). In all normally regulated Elizabethan households the gentlemen and gentlewomen-in-waiting always dined at their own tables. In spite of these indications, however, it is difficult to feel that Emilia belongs socially to the same class as Helena. Her spirited, outspoken championship of her mistress in the last scenes makes her part extraordinarily 'sympathetic'

in Act v—so much so, in fact, that an actress of any quality can sweep an audience off their feet with it: but her theft of the handkerchief, coupled with her altogether unforgivable obtuseness in the matter, offends unbearably.

The (theatrical) problem of the gentleman who is 'no gentleman', and yet is not cast for 'villain', is always a difficult one. In the present instance we can meet it by disregarding the Elizabethan social scheme, taking character as indicative of class, and presenting Emilia so as to give something of the impression of the simple-privileged-retainer—analogous to the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. To differentiate her manner as coarser, her apparel as simpler, and her intelligence and behaviour as on a lower plane, when compared with Helena and Maria, may help to prevent us from feeling that her character is split into two incongruous and irreconcilable halves. On the other hand, I do not for a moment believe that this is the Elizabethan version of the situation, as presented by Shakespeare. It would be a mere concession of the theatre to our unconscious demand for a scheme of ideal values.

We in our own day do not feel that there is anything ambiguous about the social position of such a character as Captain Dancy in Galsworthy's *Loyalties*; and on the Elizabethan stage I have no doubt that Emilia was dressed and presented like Helena and Maria—that is, as an Elizabethan gentlewoman. We can think what we like about her behaviour, but we must not say that *because* she steals the handkerchief *therefore* she cannot be a 'lady', either by birth or upbringing. It is a point which can well be illustrated by a story told in the Acts of the Privy Council,<sup>1</sup> of Sir Roger Manwood, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, who 'took' from 'one Roger Underwood, a very poor man' a chain to which he had apparently taken a fancy—'pretending it to be his own', according to the Privy Council minutes! It took strong measures and several letters from the Privy Council to make the Chief Baron return the chain to its rightful owner.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A.P.C. 1592, xxii, 451.

<sup>2</sup> But in justice to Manwood it must be added that Manningham's *Diary* gives a slightly more creditable version of the affair (see *Diary*, Camden Soc. p. 91).

When handling secondary characters of this kind Shakespeare had two methods. If his dramatic purpose simply required persons occupying a recognised position in the social scheme, we get such sketches as Lucetta, waiting-gentlewoman to Julia; Margaret and Ursula; Lady Macbeth's gentlewoman, and the Queen's woman in *Richard II*. Being first and foremost stock utilities they are true to type. They know their place, because they are their place. On another level altogether works the Shakespeare who is interested in presenting a character, and is distinctly less interested in bothering about details of social status. These other personages are not always sure of their place. Emilia seems to be a case in point; and an even more significant and interesting example is Gratiano, who is obviously conceived first as a character, and only afterwards as someone in a certain social position, and therefore related in a specific way to the other persons of the drama.

When Gratiano first enters with Bassanio and Lorenzo, Salarino's greeting is 'Good morrow, my good *lords*', which gives the momentary impression that here is yet another of Shakespeare's favourite groups of three young men—Biron-Longaville-Dumain, Don Pedro-Claudio-Benedick, Mercutio-Benvolio-Romeo. Gratiano hastens to confirm this impression by monopolising the conversation. He lectures and chaffs Antonio, that 'royal merchant', calls him 'My Antonio', and tells him 'I love thee, and it is my love that speaks'. His tone to Bassanio's 'kinsman', in fact, is the tone of Bassanio's equal, and for this particular scene it is difficult to regard him as anything else. At the lowest computation he is to Bassanio as Benedick is to Claudio. When he next appears, however, it is evident that Bassanio is a 'lord' and that Gratiano is not, although for the moment he keeps up something of the pretence of equality by addressing him as 'Signior Bassanio' (*The Merchant of Venice*, II, ii, 191, 201). After this, however, he slides rapidly down the social scale, gives up being the agreeable rattle that he set out to be, addresses his former companion as 'my lord Bassanio' and 'your lordship'; and by the end of Act IV is obviously nothing more than a gentleman-in-waiting to Bassanio, who has married



Portia's waiting-gentlewoman, and who can be sent to fetch and carry for his lord. In fact, the exigencies of the drama and the necessity of finding a husband for Nerissa, whose status is clear, translate Gratiano from one sphere of life into another. He remains a 'gentleman', but he becomes a serving-man, whereas in Act I he behaves as a character, but not as an Elizabethan gentleman-in-waiting. He begins like Benedick, and ends up like Fabian.

On the basis of the material thus collected and the examples discussed it should be possible for the producer and the student to decide upon the social position of most individuals in the plays. We can, of course, take our cue from Shakespeare and ignore facts, but it is generally wiser for the interpreter to leave that liberty to the creative artist. It will also be wiser not to try to base too much biographical conjecture upon such facts as these. It may be that to the end Shakespeare was to some extent ignorant of the manner of life at Whitehall or Theobalds or Kenilworth or Cowdray. Even if this were true, however, it is perfectly obvious that, like any other playwright in any age, he could have found out most things that he needed or wanted to know. The real value of a knowledge of the social background is twofold. In certain cases, such as *Twelfth Night*, it enables us to interpret more accurately the author's intention. It also enables us to see how, when and where Shakespeare deliberately rejects the actual. If we see this we may also see *why* he rejects it; and that means the rare privilege of yet another glimpse of the artist at work.

#### NOTE A

A most valuable document to study in conjunction with this pattern household of Viscount Montague's is the list of the servants of Henry Courtenay, Marquis of Exeter, which was made at the time of his execution in 1538.<sup>1</sup> It is valuable because it gives full details about the social status, age, means, wages, and even the accomplishments and personal appearance of most of the members of the household. First on the list come nineteen Gentlemen of the Household. Amongst them there is one William Perpoynce, 'and he is the

<sup>1</sup> Gairdner, *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*, 1538, II, 755. (S.P. I, 138.)

lady marquess's kinsman and at her finding'—in other words, financially supported by her: one William Seyntlowe, 'son and heir to Sir John Seyntlowe',<sup>1</sup> aged twenty, married to one of Sir Edward Baynton's daughters, and allowed £10 a year by his father. Then there is 'Thomas Sparrow gentleman', the Receiver-General, aged fifty-six, 'very discreet. of good conditions and also of goodly substance'. There is a Thomas Seyntlow, described as 'a tall gentleman and of personage, and shooteth well, with all other honest conditions meet for a gentleman': Thomas Godolphin, aged thirty, unmarried, who is 'diligent in serving about a nobleman, with honest and decent qualities': Richard Buller, 'of a mean stature', who is 'found' yearly by his friends to the amount of £3. 6s. 8d.: and John Ligh, described as son and heir to Mr Lieghe, the King's Gentleman-Usher.

The gentlewomen who attended upon the Lady Marquess were five in number. It is doubtful if any of them were of the same social standing as the gentlemen. Their ages range from fifty-six to twenty-two: they are all described as unmarried; and one, 'Margaret Brewne', as 'a poor woman, not having many friends'. Anne Browne is described as 'good with the needle, and can play well upon the virginals and lute'.

In the third division of the list come the ten Yeomen and Grooms of the Chamber, including the Barber, who 'is a very good Barber': also an old man of sixty, now quite helpless, who had served the family all his life; and David ap Jenkyn, who 'did always wait upon the lord marquis in his chamber'. Fourteen Yeomen-Waiters and fourteen Yeomen and Grooms of the Stable are also listed, and the Calendar computes the total number of these inferior servants as one hundred and three.

Their wages varied, not only according to the positions held, but apparently also according to their individual needs. Some were 'found' or partially found by their families or friends. Some owned lands. Others had nothing but their wages, livery and keep. The chief Gentlewoman received £3. 6s. a year, and the others £2. 13s. 4d. each.<sup>2</sup> The Schoolmaster received £6. 13s. 4d., and the Secretary

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Seyntlowe (or St Lowe) was Sheriff of Gloucester 1536-7. For the Northern Rebellion he was to bring from Somerset a troop of 100 men, and he is listed as one of those to attend on the King's own person. In 1536 he was a captain in Ireland, drew wages for 3 grand captains, 3 petty captains and 300 foot. He was one of the gentlemen appointed to meet Anne of Cleves in 1539 (see Gairdner, *Letters and Papers*, 1536-40).

<sup>2</sup> In or about 1539 we find the Lady Mounteagle's gentlewoman receiving £5, and her chambermaid 30s., with 30s. allowance for livery. Menservants' wages in the same household varied from 40s. to £5 and £6, the allowance for livery being in every case 30s. (*Hist. MSS. Comm.* No. 55, vol. III, Tresham Papers).

£4. 13s. 4d. The wages of a Gentleman-in-Waiting seem to have ranged from £6 to £12. The ordinary wage for a Yeoman of the Chamber seems to have been £1. 6s. 8d. The Yeoman of the Wardrobe had £2; so had the Porter, the three Under-Falconers, and the Chief Baker. The fourteen Yeomen-Waiters had £3. 3s. 4d. each.

## NOTE B

Other helpful details can also be gathered from the Lisle correspondence. We learn, for example, that one of Lord Lisle's land-stewards was anxious for Lady Lisle to take into her service as a gentleman-in-waiting the third son of a certain Sir Peter Philpot. Hussey writes that the father will help to maintain him, that his eldest brother is dead, and the second 'sore sick and not likely to recover; and if he die the third will recover, besides his father's land, 500 marks a year. *If he were once in service means might be found that Mrs Philippa and he might couple together*'. A waiting-gentleman, in fact, might prove a good match for a daughter of the house. On another occasion Hussey writes, 'I have been asked what you will give with Mrs Katherine's marriage'. He has let it be rumoured that her dowry might be 300 marks, but he believes that if Lady Lisle could make it 500 her daughter can secure a real matrimonial 'catch'—Sir Edward Baynton's son and heir—so that 'she will have an heir who can spend 1000 marks a year'. Sir Edward Baynton was one of the favourite courtiers of Henry VIII, vice-chamberlain to three of his queens, and head of a family that traced its descent back to the time of Henry II. One of his sons-in-law, as we have already seen, was Sir John Seyntlowe's son and heir and one of the Marquis of Exeter's gentlemen-in-waiting. Actually Katherine never married the Baynton heir, but the connexions thus established by such details help us to understand the nature of 'service' in the sixteenth century.

Lady Lisle's own gentlewomen varied in rank. At the time of the attainder of John Lord Hussey<sup>1</sup> in 1537 negotiations were on foot for her to take one of his daughters. Although executed for an alleged complicity in the Pilgrimage of Grace, Hussey had been a person of the first importance at Court. His wife was a daughter of the Earl of Kent, and he himself had held, amongst other offices, that of Comptroller of the Royal Household, and that of Chamberlain to Princess Mary. At another time Lady Weston—who had herself been one of the gentlewomen of Queen Katherine of Aragon—recommended

<sup>1</sup> Not to be confused with John Hussey, the Lisles' familiar servant, and agent in England.

Lady Lisle to take the daughter of Christopher More, 'a gentleman which my lord knoweth well'. The only Christopher More of that time who is likely to have been well known to Lord Lisle, was Sheriff of Surrey and Sussex in 1539/40. In the Squires' list of the gentlemen attending on the King who were to meet Anne of Cleves on her arrival in England Christopher More figures as a gentleman who was to ride in a coat of black velvet, with a gold chain, and to bring with him six servants. The gentlewoman herself had been brought up in the household of 'my Lady Boser', had been with Lady Weston for several years, and was strongly recommended by her as capable of waiting upon Lady Lisle or her daughters. She can 'keep your plate or your napery', writes Lady Weston; and as for the daughters of the house, she can 'bring them up well, and can teach them right good manners

Wood, *Letters*, II, 80-2.

# SHAKESPEARE'S SOURCES

BY

A. L. ATTWATER

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## THE PRACTICE OF THE THEATRES

### (a) COLLABORATION AND REVISION

In the prologue to *Volpone* Ben Jonson wrote :

'Tis knowne, five weeks fully pen'd it;  
From his owne hand, without a co-adjutor,  
Novice, journeyman, or tutor,

and this claim to have written his masterpiece so quickly without assistance emphasises a dominant condition of work in the Elizabethan theatre and a resulting practice. The repertory system and competition between the companies, as well as the limited number of theatre-goers, demanded a regular supply of fresh plays; rapidity of composition was essential, and a natural result was collaboration. Jonson himself admitted, when he published his *Sejanus*, that in that play as acted 'a second Pen had good share', but he replaced the work of his collaborator by his own rather than 'defraud so happy a Genius of his right by my lothed usurpation'. In the collection of plays attributed to the famous partnership of Beaumont and Fletcher there was certainly 'lothed usurpation' of the rights of Massinger and others. But, while title-pages rarely name more than two authors, Henslowe's accounts often show three or four, or even five poets, working together on one play.

The demand for fresh plays might also be satisfied in part by the furbishing up of old ones, but the evidence for such revision

is not so straightforward. A statement on the title-page that a play has been 'newly corrected, augmented, and amended' was often made because an imperfect, pirated version was already in the booksellers' shops. On the other hand Henslowe sometimes marked as 'new' a play which had already appeared some years before. *The Spanish Tragedy* is thus marked by him in 1597, and an edition of this play was published in 1602 'with new additions of the Painter's part'. The additions generally held to have been made by Bird and Rowley to Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* are also substantial. Hamlet says to the First Player:

Can you play *The Murder of Gonzago*?  
and then asks:

You could, for need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

The Player's ready assent would suggest that he found nothing strange in this proposal. It is reasonably conjectured that some time after Shakespeare's death extra songs and dances for the witches were added to *Macbeth*.

There were many reasons why plays in the stock of a repertory company should be altered from time to time. Topical allusions went out of date and new ones would be needed. Henslowe's accounts record payment to poets for 'mending' their own and other men's plays for performance at Court, and changes in the place of performance or in the personnel of a company might necessitate revision.<sup>1</sup> Customs differed between theatres, and Marston's *Malcontent*, written for performance at the Blackfriars, where there was music between the acts, had to be lengthened for the Globe, where the custom of music was 'not received'.

But these additions and mendings scarcely warrant the assumption that whenever an old play was revived, its style and

<sup>1</sup> The two versions of *King Lear*, iv, vii, in one of which Lear is obviously discovered in bed and in the other 'Enter Lear in a chaire carried by servan', indicate 'mending' either for a performance where no inner stage was available or to make more theatrically effective the playing of the rest of the scene, while in the Quarto of *Othello* Desdemona's song is cut, presumably because the King's Men had, at the time when this version was written, no leading boy actor who could sing.

structure were drastically altered. Possibly the practice of adapting Elizabethan plays common after the Restoration indicates a survival of an old custom of the theatre, but in a company with a fairly permanent personnel, revision would probably be limited. Burbage would not wish to study a different Hamlet every few years.

### (b) THE HUNT FOR PLOTS

The urgent needs of the theatre encouraged the poets to lay their hands on all likely matter for drama. The more scholarly among them made use of their wide reading. *Tamburlaine* shows that Marlowe's knowledge of history and geography was extensive, and Jonson having inserted in *Catiline* long translated extracts from Cicero's speeches, retorted upon his critics, 'Though you commend the two first acts, with the people, because they are the worst; and dislike the oration of Cicero in regard you read some pieces of it at school and understand it not yet: yet I shall find the way to forgive you'. Act 1 contained the ghost of Sylla, prodigies of darkness, groans and fiery lights, and the drinking by the conspirators of the blood of a murdered slave—effects which would appeal to the groundlings, but for which Jonson had the authority of his books. Other dramatists chose more popular sources. Collections of tales such as Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* and Fenton's *Tragicall Discourses* had made the English reader familiar with the Italian novel. *A Mirror for Magistrates* and the *Chronicles of Holinshed* were an inexhaustible quarry for a national drama, and nobler material treated in a more inspiring way was available in North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*. Here was God's plenty for the dramatist seeking a plot.

### (c) PLAGIARISM

Such a common stock of reading offered to the dramatists a rapidly available supply of ready-made stories with conventional situations and characters. The hero villain, the braggart captain, the comic constable were any man's material, and some of these characters would, like the Clown, be expected by the audience

to conform to the traditions of the old drama. Consequently, with the pressing need for quick production, originality was rare. Moreover, the rivalry between companies often led to the direct imitation by one of what another had made popular. Nor at first did much moral stigma attach to plagiarism. From time to time protest was made, as when R. B. wrote in *Greene's Funeralls*,

Greene made the ground to all that wrote upon him.  
Nay more the men that so eclipsed his fame  
Purloyned his Plumes, can they deny the same?

Nashe, it is true, dignified the theatre with the title of Poets' Hall, but the writing of plays does not at first seem to have been put on the same footing as other literary work. The players bought the poet's play, which then became the property of the company. Jonson, who was laughed at for calling his plays 'Works', took a more serious view of the playwright's standing, and the second earliest use of the word *plagiarism* recorded in the *Oxford Dictionary* is in his *Poetaster*. Crispinus (Marston), singing as his own a song by Horace (Jonson), is called 'plagiary', and Demetrius (Dekker) is arraigned as 'play-dresser and plagiary'. Jonson's outlook was exceptional, but his sonnet-epigram on Poet-Ape must have had a basis in contemporary fact and sentiment.

Poore POET-APE, that would be thought our chiefe,  
Whose workes are eene the fripperie of wit,  
From brocage is become so bold a thiefe,  
That we the rob'd, leave rage, and pittie it.  
At first he made low shifts, would picke and gleane,  
Buy the reversion of old playes; now growne  
To 'a litle wealth, and credit in the scene,  
He takes up all, makes each man's wit his owne:  
And, told of this, he slights it. Tut, such crimes  
The sluggish gaping auditor deuoures;  
He marks not whose 'twas first: and after-times  
May iudge it to be his, as well as ours.  
Foole, as if halfe eyes will not knew a fleece  
From locks of wooll, or shreds from the whole peece.



## SHAKESPEARE'S SOURCES

## (a) DRAMATIC MATERIAL

(i) *Henry VI*

The 'reversion of old plays' has become an obsession with editors and critics of Shakespeare, but since Malone it has been generally held that he may have served his apprenticeship as a 'play-dresser', revising and bringing up to date the work of other men. In all the early plays critics have found incongruity of style, crude characterisation and unpleasing matter, which seem not to be explained by immaturity, and parallels with the work of other poets, which go beyond imitation. Somewhat doubtful testimony of the late seventeenth century attributed *Titus Andronicus* to a 'private author', to whose play Shakespeare only gave some 'master-touches', but though no lover of Shakespeare would be sorry for proof that he had no hand in what Dr Johnson called the 'barbarity of the spectacles', it is difficult in the face of Meres's direct statement to acquit him of some considerable share in the play. The epilogue to *Solimus* (1594) ends:

If this first part, Gentles, do like you well,  
The second part shall greater murders tell.

It was for these 'gentles' that Shakespeare was writing, and *Titus Andronicus* was a popular play.

It is, however, round Shakespeare's share in the three parts of *Henry VI* that controversy has raged longest. Part I appeared first in the Folio, but versions of Parts II and III were published in quarto, *The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster* in 1594, *The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke* in 1595. Although Dr Johnson came to the conclusion that these were piracies, it was commonly held until lately that they represented early versions of plays of composite authorship which Shakespeare afterwards revised, and confirmation of this view was found in Greene's famous attack on Shakespeare, where the line of verse is a parody of

O tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide.

*III Henry VI*, I, iv, 137.

The interpretation put upon Greene's complaint was that Shakespeare, like Jonson's Poet-Ape, had obtained 'the reversion of old plays' by the University Wits and had sprung into fame by dressing them up. It has now been proved that the quartos are 'bad' quartos, giving pirated versions of plays which are more correctly represented in the text of the Folio, and Greene, it is suggested, was attacking a player, who having won his position by speaking the poets' lines—a puppet that spake from their mouths—now had the audacity to bombast out blank verse of his own.<sup>1</sup> Contemporaries seem to have understood Greene's charge as one of plagiarism (see the quotation from *Greene's Funeralls* on p. 222), but the new explanation seems the sounder. There remains therefore only internal evidence of style upon which to determine the question of authorship. The authenticity of all three parts has been doubted since Pope, and in Part I, which might have become associated with the other two, even if it were not by the same author, Malone maintained that except in parts of the Fourth Act, there was 'not a single print of the footsteps of Shakespeare'. A desire to acquit Shakespeare of the denigration of Joan of Arc has been common and natural, but the degeneration of her character is to be found in the chronicles upon which the play is based, and at so early a stage of dramatic development in the Elizabethan theatre it would be unwise to lay too much stress on inconsistent characterisation, especially when it has the warranty of the chronicles. It is also unreasonable to expect a dramatic poet writing for a popular audience to whitewash an enemy alien, of whom the sober chronicler used such phrases as 'all damnable faithlesse to be a pernicious instrument to hostilitie and bloudshed in diuelish witchcraft and sorcerie'. Moreover, when attempts are made to assign the different strands in all three parts to Marlowe, Greene, Peele or other supposed authors, there is no substantial agreement except on two points. One passage of blank verse so mature as to suggest an 'addition' for some late revival (Part II, v, ii, 31-56) is given by all critics to Shakespeare, and most of them seem inclined to attribute the Joan of Arc episodes to

<sup>1</sup> Peter Alexander, *Shakespeare's Henry VI and Richard III*, 1929.

Peel. Support for Shakespeare's authorship of Parts II and III has been increased by the proof that the *Contention* and the *True Tragedie* are pirated versions of these two plays.

(ii) *The Ur-Hamlet*

That Shakespeare began work as a reviser has also been conjectured from other 'bad' quartos. To solve the problems raised by these 'stolne and surreptitious copies' it has been suggested that the pirates had recourse to some old play on which Shakespeare had probably already worked, and for an early dramatic version of the story of Hamlet there is considerable evidence. In 1589, in his preface to Greene's novel *Menaphon*, Nashe wrote:

It is a common practice nowadays amongst a sort of shifting companions, that runne through every Art and thrive by none, to leave the trade of *Noverint*, whereto they were borne, and busie themselves with the indevous of Art, that could scarcely Latinize their neck verse if they should have neede; yet English *Seneca* read by Candle-light yeelds many good sentences, as *Blood is a begger* and so forth; and if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, hee will affoord you whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls of Tragicall speeches.

Nashe continues with a reference to 'the Kid in Aesop' and a taunt that these 'furnished followers' of Seneca have now been driven 'to intermeddle with Italian translations'. The father of Thomas Kyd was a scrivener; Kyd himself had probably translated an Italian treatise just before Nashe wrote this preface. *The Spanish Tragedy*, acknowledged to be Kyd's, was clearly written under Senecan influence and is a play about revenge. The reference to the kid in Aesop may be a punning indication of the person at whom Nashe is aiming his satire. A play *Hamlet* was certainly performed in June 1594, probably by the Chamberlain's Men, and between this date and 1600 there are scattered references to a play or plays on this theme. On these grounds Malone ascribed to Kyd a *Hamlet*, which has since been named the *Ur-Hamlet*. Moreover a German version of the play, *Der Bestrafte Brudermord*, shows obvious kinship with the 'bad' First Quarto, having for example the name of Corambus for Polonius. Parallels with the verse style and diction of Kyd have been

traced in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and these are more common in the 'bad' quarto; and dramatic difficulties in the play have been attributed to out-croppings of the *Ur-Hamlet*.

But though a fairly strong case can be made out that Kyd wrote a *Hamlet*, and though by careful scrutiny of the texts critics have elaborated theories of a continuity from the *Ur-Hamlet* of Kyd through a series of revisions by Shakespeare and others to the play as it stands in the Folio, the proper verdict is still 'not proven'. The problem of the First Quarto may still be from what sort of an abridgment of Shakespeare it derives, and how much of its peculiarity is to be ascribed to the assistance given to the pirates by an improvising actor with his memory full of tags from parts which he had been playing. Nor have the possibilities and results of shorthand reporting been fully explored.<sup>1</sup> Probably Shakespeare took a story which had already been dramatised and a hero, the outlines of whose character were already known, and treated them in his own way.

### (iii) *Old Plays*

Doubt whether Shakespeare was to any great extent an adapter of other men's work is raised by the study of four extant 'old plays', all at some time owned by the Queen's Men, on subjects which he afterwards handled, namely *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, *The True Tragedie of Richard the Third*, and *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his three daughters*.<sup>2</sup> None of these plays bears any textual relation whatever to the corresponding play by Shakespeare. He may have taken from the *True Tragedie* a hint or two such as the hesitation of the second murderer of Clarence, or from *King Leir* that striking piece of stage business when

<sup>1</sup> See *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke*, 1603, edited by G. B. Harrison (Bodley Head Quartos); see also articles by W. Matthews, *Modern Language Review* (July, 1932, and January, 1933), on the impracticability of the existing systems of shorthand for reporting plays in the theatre.

<sup>2</sup> *The Taming of the Shrew* is excluded from this discussion owing to the doubt whether *The Taming of A Shrew* is to be regarded as a source play or a 'bad' quarto, and *Measure for Measure*, because Wheistone's *Promos and Cessandra* appears never to have been acted.

Cordelia kneels before Lear asking his blessing and he before her asking her pardon. There is nothing in *King Lear* of Lear's madness, there is no Fool, and the play ends, like Tate's version, with the victory and restoration of Lear. *The Famous Victories* covers the whole range of both parts of *Henry IV* and *Henry V*, and the chief link between it and Shakespeare's work is that the leader of the Prince's disreputable company is Sir John Oldcastle, nicknamed Jockey. He is but a wraith of Shakespeare's Oldcastle-Falstaff, although there is one passage in which he shows a slight trace of Falstaffian unction.

*Prince Henry.* But heres such adoo now a dayes, heres prisoning, heres hanging, whipping, and the divel and all; But I tel you sirs, when I am King, we will have no such things, if the old king my father were dead, we would be all kings.

*Oldcastle.* Hee is a good olde man, God take him to his mercy the sooner.

It has been conjectured that between the *Famous Victories*, which may be an abridgment of two plays, and Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *Henry V* there was an intermediate handling by some other dramatist of the whole story of Prince Hal. It is hard to believe that there was anything between the *Troublesome Raigne* and *King John*. The relation between these two plays is therefore important. It would be rash to generalise from one special instance, but with such confirmation as is afforded by the *True Tragedie*, *King Lear* and the *Famous Victories*, it may be suggested that when Shakespeare took as his source an existing old play, he completely rewrote it rather than dressed it up. Between the *Troublesome Raigne* and *King John* there are few verbal links, and though Shakespeare retained the main structure of the old play, everywhere his work shows signs of a new shaping spirit of art. Episodes are rearranged to achieve a truly dramatic progress towards the climax, character is revitalised, and the language is entirely transmuted. The old play is full of crude anti-papal propaganda; in removing most of this Shakespeare certainly obscured the motive of the monk in poisoning the King. This loose end is evident in the study, but in the theatre the swift following of John's attempt to murder Arthur by his

misfortunes and death enables Shakespeare to disguise a *post-hoc* as a *propter-hoc*, and to effect an illusion of tragic consequence. In the old play *Faulconbridge* is little more than a braggart, incapable of that anger and pity with which Shakespeare ennobles him as he stands over the dead body of Arthur. If *King John* gives any idea of the normal way in which Shakespeare 'mended' old plays, there is no need to trouble much about the nature of the *Ur-Hamlet*, or of the *Jew*, supposed to be at the back of *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>1</sup>

## (b) NON-DRAMATIC MATERIAL

### (i) *Holinshed*

Shakespeare's art is also revealed in his method of turning into drama the history which he found in Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Of the early historical plays *Richard II* keeps closest to its source, although the story is transformed by much imaginative invention and by a marked indulgence in the lyric moment, as for instance in the Deposition scene, the elaborate ritual of which derives more from Froissart than from Holinshed. Froissart also tells a story of the greyhound Mathe, who deserted Richard for Bolingbroke, a story which may have given Shakespeare a hint for 'roan Barbary'. For *I Henry IV*, in which Shakespeare perfected his own type of history, he had the *Famous Victories* as authority for Prince Hal's wildness, a theme which is not greatly emphasised by Holinshed. Nor did the chronicles give any help towards the character of the altogether admirable Hotspur, whose age Shakespeare does not scruple to alter to suit the design of his play. What he took from Holinshed was the episode of the Percies' rebellion, drawn to it perhaps by the

<sup>1</sup> To give the *Troublesome Raigne* its due, there is more humanity in Arthur's words after he has thrown himself from the battlements:

Hoe, who is nigh, some body take me up,  
Where is my mother? let me speak with her,

than in Shakespeare's conceit:

Oh me! my uncle's spirit is in these stones.

incident of the quarrel over the prisoners, since Essex, a man as covetous of honour as Hotspur, had lately been involved in a curiously similar quarrel with his sovereign. The scene between the Prince and his father Shakespeare transferred from a later date. It seems likely that he intended Part I to be complete in itself, with Prince Hal's 'reformation' established at the battle of Shrewsbury, which Holinshed marks with a marginal caption, '*The valiancy of the yoong prince*'. Part II can be regarded as a hastily written encore, and the increase in Falstaffian matter reveals the cause; it is not surprising that the historical framework, a mere copy of Part I, is not so close to the chronicles, although the King's dying admonition to his son is straight from Holinshed. At Agincourt there was no room for Falstaff, and in *Henry V* Shakespeare's reliance on Holinshed is again considerable, while for the 'command' play, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which provided more 'fat meat' for Queen Elizabeth, it is quite reasonably supposed that he dressed up some existing play, which may have been the conjectured *Jealous Comedy*.

Shakespeare's method of using Holinshed was to select some section of the chronicles which gave him a satisfactory framework for his play. Material which expressed motive or which enabled him to reveal or develop character might be shifted from its proper historical setting and added to this nucleus. Material which proved intractable was either abandoned altogether or handled merely by reference. His debt to the chronicles is often to be seen in the marginal captions of Holinshed, such as '*King Richard in utter despaire*', at his landing from Ireland, or '*A guiltie conscience in extremitie of sicknesse pincheth sore*', of Henry IV. For characterisation Holinshed only occasionally breaks his narrative to give a sketch such as that of Queen Margaret, 'This ladie excelled all other, as well in beautie and favour, as in wit and policie; and was of stomach and courage more like to a man than a woman', or of Richard II, 'He was seemelie of shape and favor, & of nature good inough, if the wickednesse & naughtie demeanor of such as were about him had not altered it'.

(ii) *North's Plutarch*

Throughout the later English histories Shakespeare seems to be setting himself the problem of characterisation. These men lived and died, as the chroniclers relate; what manner of men were they? At the moment when he was passing 'from *Henry V* to *Hamlet*' in search of a better instrument for expressing character, biography takes the place of chronicles as his source, and biography which combines the psychology and narrative skill of a Greek philosopher-historian with the vigorous style of a typical Elizabethan. North's *Plutarch* was a collection of heroic portraits with an immediate appeal to the men of Shakespeare's age. Holinshed gave him matter, but rarely suggested the style of his treatment; the mass of verbal borrowing from North tells a different tale.<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, moreover, with the tradition of a great dramatic literature behind him, often writes his biographies in such a way as to suggest tragedy, and Shakespeare accepts from him hints for his own tragic pattern.

In *Julius Caesar* for the scaffolding of his play he still uses the method which he had applied to Holinshed, and takes the last few pages of Plutarch's *Life of Caesar*, beginning at a point where North notes marginally, '*Why Caesar was hated*'. These pages tell the story of Caesar's assassination and the riot which followed his funeral, and then Plutarch comments:

So he reaped no other fruit of all his reign and dominion, which he had so vehemently desired all his life, and pursued with such extreme danger, but a vain name only, and a superficial glory, that procured him the envy and hatred of his country. But his great prosperity and good fortune, that favoured him all his lifetime, did continue afterwards in the revenge of his death, pursuing his murderers both by sea and land, till they had not left a man more to be executed, of all them that were actors or counsellors in the conspiracy of his death.

<sup>1</sup> The extent of this borrowing is much greater in the two later Roman plays, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*, but it is worth noting that when he returned to Holinshed for parts of *Macbeth*, in the dialogue between Malcolm and Macduff (Act iv, Sc. iii), at a point in the play where dramatic tension is relaxed, and, it may be, Shakespeare's interest, being centred in *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth*, momentarily flagged, he followed the language of his source almost as closely as in *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*.



There follows briefly the story of Philippi, and of the spirit that appeared to Brutus, saying, 'I am thy ill angel'. Here then in the *Life of Caesar* was the plot for a tragedy of Caesar's death and of his 'spirit ranging for revenge'; Shakespeare fills it out with matter chiefly from the *Life of Brutus*. The *Life of Caesar* gave him his plot, the *Life of Brutus* most of his characterisation. The enigmatic character of Caesar may be due to an attempt to reconcile Plutarch's picture with current opinion of the 'thra-sonical', 'hook-nosed fellow of old Rome'; but for Brutus, Portia and Cassius, Plutarch yielded ample matter, even to Portia's inconsistency and the contrast between the characters of Brutus and Cassius—'It is also reported that Brutus could evil away with the tyranny, and that Cassius hated the tyrant'. The closeness of *Julius Caesar* to its source is the strongest argument against the theory that the play represents the work of half a dozen poets at different times.<sup>1</sup>

For *Antony and Cleopatra* Shakespeare begins his borrowing from Plutarch's *Life of Antony*, at a point where the *Life* tells how 'the last and extremest mischief of all (to wit the love of Cleopatra) lighted on him'. Here, though the borrowing is extensive, even to the versification of North's prose in such speeches as Enobarbus' description of Cleopatra's barge, it is the romantic transmutation of what is borrowed, which repays study. Plutarch wrote, 'For they made an order between them, which they called *Amimetobion* (as much to say, no life comparable and matchable with it), one feasting each other by turns, and in cost exceeding all measure and reason'. This idea of luxury Shakespeare has transformed to

The Nobleness of life  
Is to do thus: when such a mutual pair,  
And such a twain can do't, in which I bind  
On pain of punishment, the world to weet  
We stand up Peerless.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Disintegrators of the canon who have urged that *Julius Caesar* was revised by Ben Jonson have attributed this inconsistency of Portia to Jonson's dislike of political ladies; North, however, thought it worth the caption, '*The weakness of Portia notwithstanding her former courage*'.

<sup>2</sup> The capitals are from the Folio; the emphasis on *Peerless* may reveal an echo of *Amimetobion*.

Shakespeare, however, seems to have felt the need for some such contrast as is provided throughout the play by Enobarbus's dry comments upon Cleopatra and for some other foil to Antony than his rival Octavius, and for this purpose he practically invented the character of Enobarbus, who in Plutarch is little more than a name.

In the same way and for a somewhat similar dramatic purpose the character of Menenius in *Coriolanus* is worked up from very slight material in Plutarch. In this play, though verbal borrowing is perhaps at its greatest, Shakespeare treats history with much more freedom. The details of the political struggle did not interest him, although the political opinions of his hero form a great part of the character as presented in the play. The great scene between mother and son which is the climax of the tragedy comes straight from Plutarch, and there are many references in the *Life* to Coriolanus' love for Volumnia. Plutarch's description of his character is that of a *choleric* man, but at the end of it he notes that the Romans in those days set great store by 'valiantness, which they call *virtus*', to which North's marginal note is '*What this word VIRTUS signifieth*'. Coriolanus is Shakespeare's last study of that heroic 'virtue' which the Renaissance loved.

### (iii) *The Italian Novel*

The Italian novel and the great mass of romance material available in poems and collections of tales must have made a different appeal to Shakespeare. Here was stuff with which to make patterns, to be altered and mixed at will and as he liked, full of stock ideas of girls disguised as boys or pastoral simplicity. For the comedies before 1600 all these romances gave him what he needed for the centre of his design, a pair of lovers in some interesting or curious adventure; to this he could add whatever his comic invention might create in the persons of Dogberry, Touchstone or Feste, Sir Andrew or Malvolio, and could enrich the whole with music and song. Even the romance itself might, as in *Much Ado about Nothing*, form the tapestry before which a pair of lovers whom he had himself invented could play their

wrangling comedy. As he wrote, names and incidents easily passed in his mind from one old tale to another, and his memory offered him all sorts of combinations. The road to Nanadu could not be more phantom-thronged than the voyage to Illyria.

Some of the stories from Italy chosen by Shakespeare for his plots may have been already dramatised. Arthur Brooke in the preface to his narrative poem, *Romous and Juliet*, wrote that he had seen 'the same argument lately set foorth on stage'. It is, however, unnecessary to assume such an 'old play' as Shakespeare's main source, and the relation between *Romeo and Juliet* and Brooke's poem is sufficiently close to make it clear that Shakespeare made use of this poem rather than the prose version of the tale in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*. The chief alteration which he makes in the story is his drastic shortening of the time of the action. In the poem, after the secret marriage of Romeo and Juliet,

The summer of their blisse doth last a month or twaine,  
and considerable time elapses after Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment before the match with County Paris brings the tragedy to its crisis. Shakespeare brings Romeo straight from the marriage at Friar Laurence's cell to the fatal street brawl where Mercutio and Tybalt are slain, and it is only a day or two after his departure into exile that the news of Juliet's death brings him riding hastily back to Verona. The rapidity of action which Shakespeare achieved by this concentration of the whole story into a few days is part of the secret of the play's dramatic effectiveness. In the same way, with the characterisation, the lively variety given to the early part of the play by the figures of Mercutio and the Nurse is Shakespeare's own invention. He found in Brooke a mere hint of the Nurse's comic garrulity, and the character and wit of Mercutio are all his own.

Another romance which came to England from Italy was that mediaeval graft on to the Homeric legend, the love-story of Troilus and Cressida, but by the time that Shakespeare wrote his play on this theme the whole tone of the story had strangely altered. The character of Cressida had much degenerated from

that which Chaucer's sympathetic handling had introduced to English readers. The inclusion in the collected editions of Chaucer's works of Henryson's *The Testament of Cresseid* as the concluding book of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* had made men familiar with the picture of Cressida 'with fleshly lust so maculait' and 'so giglotlike'.<sup>1</sup> She had become a symbol of wantonness and fickleness. Pandarus too had fallen from the gallant and sympathetic friend of Troilus, whom Chaucer portrays, and his name had already added a word to the English language. The Greek heroes had also suffered much denigration. Mediaeval romance was always on the side of Troy, and both Caxton, whose book Shakespeare certainly used, and Lydgate portray Achilles as cruel and unscrupulous, killing both Hector and Troilus by unknighly treachery. Lydgate even blames Homer for setting such high store by Achilles:

Wherfor, Omer, preyse him now no more.  
Let not his pris thi rial boke disface,  
But in al haste his renoun out arace.

Against this prevailing view Chapman's translation of seven books of the *Iliad* could have prevailed but little at the time when Shakespeare was writing his *Troilus and Cressida*, and those who like Swinburne criticise Shakespeare for 'brutalising' the character of the great Achilles, whom they know from Homer, are forgetting the material on which Shakespeare had to work.

*Troilus and Cressida* is also an interesting example of Shakespeare's weaving together strands of plot taken from different sources into one continuous story. In this way it is like *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Cymbeline*. He allows himself complete freedom in rearranging episodes which he found in his authorities. The pivot of the war-story is the duel between Hector and Ajax, and this he took from Chapman, but Achilles' love for Polyxena and his traitorous correspondence with the enemy are incidents related by Caxton at a much later stage of the siege. Shakespeare uses them to make more rational the inaction of Achilles. And as

<sup>1</sup> There exists a fragmentary 'plot' of a play on this story in which the words 'Enter Cressida, with Beggers' suggest that the fate of leprosy which Henryson assigns to Cressida was part of the action of this lost play.

always, a reading of his sources gives occasional glimpses of Shakespeare at work. It has been suggested that in Ulysses' complaint that 'the specialty of rule hath been neglected', a theme which appealed greatly to Shakespeare, there is an echo of a speech of Homer's Ulysses, which Chapman translates :

Nor must Greekes be so irregular  
To live as every man may take the scepter from the king:  
The rule of many is absurd, one Lord must leade the ring  
Of far resounding government.

In Chapman he certainly found the character of the railing Thersites, but there is no clear origin for the stupidity of Ajax. It has been attributed to a simile in Homer describing his stubbornness in battle as like a 'dull mill ass', which the children cannot drive away from the cornfield :

And still the self-providing asse doth with their weakenes beare,  
Not stirring till his wombe be full, and scarcely then will stee.  
So the huge sonne of Tellamon amongst the Trojans tarde.

But there is another hint in Chapman which may have been more fruitful. After the duel between Ajax and Hector the Greeks hold a feast :

An Oxe that fed on fyve sayre springs, they fleede and quartred him,  
And then (in peeces cut) on spits they rosted every limb;  
Which neatly cookt they drew it off: worke done, they fell to feast;  
All had inough; but Telamon the king fed past the rest  
With good large peeces of the chyne.

Thersites in his first scene with Ajax calls him a mongrel *beef-witted* lord.<sup>1</sup>

Two comedies, *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale*, are straightforward dramatisations of English novels, and both Lodge's *Rosalynde* and Greene's *Pandosto* offered opportunities to exploit the pastoral theme. Lodge gave to his novel the sub-title of *Euphues' Golden Legacy*, and the talk of Shakespeare's courtiers and lovers in Arden has something of the flavour of Lyly's dialogue. The sub-title of Greene's *Pandosto* is *The Triumph of Time*, which in itself is suggestive of what some critics find to

<sup>1</sup> Compare Sir Andrew Aguecheek's excuse when he has been 'put down' by Maria. 'I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that does harm to my wits'.

be Shakespeare's purpose in the later romances, to present dramatically the theme of a reconciliation through the mediation of the younger generation, and it is in keeping with such a purpose that Shakespeare softens somewhat the harsher ending of Greene's story. But again it is not so much what Shakespeare takes from his source as what he adds that gives the plays their particular charm. The forest of Arden would not be the same without Jaques, nor the Bohemian sheep-shearing without Autolycus.

It is, however, significant that, if we except *Hamlet*, which may have come to Shakespeare already dramatised, *Othello* only of the great tragedies of his maturity was based upon a romance. Here the main framework and the chief joints in the story are the same in the play as in Cinthio's novel. Shakespeare's change of the method of killing Desdemona is due primarily to his fundamentally different conception of the Moor's character.<sup>1</sup> In the tale the ensign (Iago) steals the handkerchief from Desdemona, while she is caressing his three-year-old child, but there is nothing about the magic of the handkerchief, a brilliant invention of Shakespeare which enables him to show Othello dominating Desdemona, as during their courtship, by his tales of wonder. The tragic irony of this intimate glimpse into the past was not within the power of the tale-teller. But the real core of the story, the conflict between the Moor's love for Desdemona and the inner villainy of the outwardly pleasing ensign, is in the novel, and the Moor's distress under the ensign's persistent probing is expressed in a number of vivid images. Some of the material is rearranged, and there are additions, as for instance Roderigo, introduced as one means of interpreting the character of Iago. For it is by characterisation chiefly, of which there is but little in the novel, that Shakespeare transforms the story. Here he seems to be putting into his source what in *Julius Caesar* he was drawing out of Plutarch. The creation of *Hamlet* had intervened between these two plays.

<sup>1</sup> In the novel the Moor and the ensign are mainly concerned to hide all traces of their guilt, which they do by pulling down part of the ceiling upon Desdemona, after Iago has killed her, in order to suggest accidental death.

## SHAKESPEARE'S READING

No English translation of Cinthio's tale of the Moor of Venice is known to have existed in Shakespeare's time, but since he quotes Italian in *Love's Labour's Lost*, he may have used the original Italian novel, and several parallels between the play and the novel confirm this conjecture. When the ensign has imparted to the Moor his ingenious plot for the murder of Desdemona, Cinthio writes, 'Piacque al Moro il crudel consiglio', and although Shakespeare has altered all the details of this part of the story, there is in Othello's 'Good, good, the justice of it pleases', evidence that Shakespeare still had the novel clearly in his mind. Shakespeare's knowledge, however, of languages and his general learning have been very much debated. The search for parallel passages in other authors, especially the classics, may have begun on that famous occasion when the worthy John Hales of Lion retorted to Ben Jonson, that if 'Mr Shakespeare had not read the Ancients, he had likewise not stolen anything from them', and undertook to produce on any 'topic finely treated' by any of the classical authors 'something upon the same subject at least as well written by Shakespeare'. Later in reaction against an attribution to Shakespeare of a very wide reading in the classics Richard Farmer wrote his famous *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare*, in which he asserted that Shakespeare's 'studies were most demonstratively confined to nature and his own language', and that 'the source of a tale hath been often in vain sought abroad, which might easily have been found at home'. Ben Jonson, a good scholar, probably wrote in self-comparison when he allowed to Shakespeare 'small Latin, and less Greek', and Farmer's own immense learning probably caused him to exaggerate his denial of learning to Shakespeare. But his insistence on the necessity for critics of Shakespeare to acquire 'an intimate acquaintance with the writers of the time, who are frequently of no other value', indicated a fruitful line of study, and much of modern research is foreshadowed in his verdict on editors' mistakes: 'The cant of the age, a provincial expression, an obscure proverb, an obsolete

custom, a hint at a person or fact no longer remembered, hath continually defeated the best of our guesses'.

The study of books which Shakespeare appears to have used certainly reveals him as a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. The Anthropophagi, with stories of whom Othello charmed Desdemona, are to be found in Philemon Holland's translation of Pliny's *Natural History* (1601), the devils with whom Edgar communes during his feigned madness in *King Lear* are enumerated in a tract against witchcraft, Samuel Harsnett's *A Declaration of egregious Popist Impostors* (1603), and many other examples of such borrowing of topics and even phrases can be collected. One passage in *The Tempest*, where Shakespeare is making use of Florio's translation of Montaigne, has raised the question how far Montaigne either directly or through Florio influenced Shakespeare. *Hamlet* is the play which suggests most clearly the philosophy of Montaigne, and Florio's translation was not published until 1603, but Shakespeare must have known Florio through the common patronage of Southampton and therefore may have seen some of his work before publication. Possibly, however, such apparent reflection of Montaigne's thought as may be found in Shakespeare may be due to the spirit of the age affecting both of them rather than to the influence of one upon the other.

## THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE CANON

Two plays, *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*, based upon Italian romances and written during the tragic period, while they contain much which only the mature Shakespeare could have written, are uneven and seem to many critics to contain alien matter. Collaboration has therefore been suggested, with Chapman or with one George Wilkins, an obscure novelist and poetaster, whose hand has also been traced in *Pericles*. *Timon of Athens* seems to have been left unfinished by Shakespeare, but its finishers have been variously identified. Certain shows in the plays written after Shakespeare had retired to Stratford have on grounds of style been ascribed to other



pens, as for instance parts of *Cymbeline*, especially the vision, and the masque in *The Tempest*. In the middle of the eighteenth century a critic pointed out unusual versification in *Henry VIII*, and much of this is now ascribed to Fletcher. For collaboration between Shakespeare and Fletcher evidence has also been found in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, in which there is the same mixture of styles and which in the Stationers' Register of 1634 was entered under their names, and there is a still later entry under their names in 1653 of a play now lost, *Cardenio*, probably the *Cardenno* performed by the King's Men in 1613.

On the assumption that Shakespeare started as an adapter of old plays and finished by collaborating with other poets, and that revision and collaboration were established practices in the Elizabethan theatre, scholars have sought over the whole body of his work for traces of revision and of other hands. Investigation has been made both by bibliographical research and by an attempt to be equally scientific in the discrimination of styles. The result of these investigations has been called the Disintegration of Shakespeare.

J. M. Robertson, who carried furthest disintegration by means of the judgment of styles, claimed as his aim 'the scientific solution of the assignment of alien matter to alien hands'. In such an examination all incongruities of language or rhythm, and all inequalities of dramatic technique must be scrutinised, and all parallels to the work of other authors collected. Robertson's conclusions can be summed up in his own description of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as Shakespeare's 'first, and indeed only complete work'. The bibliographical disintegrators proceed by the study of all the clues which the original texts provide, such as differences of spelling, curious punctuation, passages of verse printed as prose, the wrong lineation of verse, inconsistent speech-headings, the presence of 'mutes' in stage-directions or of actors' names in speech-headings, and all those irregularities which the edited texts conceal. Professor Dover Wilson, in examining on these lines the texts of the fourteen comedies, has only left four to Shakespeare's sole work. In all the rest he finds fragments either of pre-Shakespearian work or of the work of col-

laborators, and in almost all he argues for abridgment or drastic revision. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the only play left by Mr Robertson to Shakespeare, Professor Wilson, though allowing Shakespeare's authorship, finds at least three strata of composition and revision.

The bibliographical investigation, as it is more objective, should be more reliable than the discrimination of styles, but it can be questioned whether our limited knowledge of the habits of Elizabethan authors with their manuscripts and of Elizabethan compositors with their copy justifies some of the theories based upon the irregularities of the printed text. Shakespeare himself was probably not consistent in his 'foul papers', and something of this inconsistency would remain in his fair copy, and eccentricities of spelling and punctuation would generally be obscured by the conventional practice of scribes and compositors. The ignorance and incompetence of many of the compositors are only too apparent.

How difficult it is to be scientific in the discrimination of styles and how easy to 'lose distinction' is proved by the divergence of opinions on the authorship of *Henry VII*. 'From mere inferiority', wrote Dr Johnson, 'nothing can be inferred; in the productions of wit there will be inequality. Sometimes judgment will err, and sometimes the matter itself will defeat the artist.' J. L. Lowes has shown what strange fragments of a poet's reading may emerge from his subconscious memory, and an overworked actor-dramatist might often fall back on common form. Further, metrical tests are not reliable when applied either to small sections or to admittedly early work in which a poet may be under some dominating influence of the moment or experimenting towards an individual style. Many years after Marlowe's death Jonson preserved the memory of his 'mighty line' and its full influence on the young Shakespeare must be accepted, while in his mature work account must be taken of weariness, lack of interest, haste in composition, or dramatic intention in varying the texture of his verse.

The extent to which disintegration has been carried has produced a natural reaction. The proof of the honesty of Heminge

and Condell in the matter of the 'stolne and surreptitious' quartos has certainly given greater authority to the Folio as the canon, but reaction has perhaps gone too far. The study of Shakespeare's manner of handling his known sources removes all doubt of the originality of his genius either in creating characters or in shaping stories to fulfil his dramatic purpose, but orthodox criticism has never been afraid of admitting the presence of alien matter in several plays in the Folio. Ben Jonson retorted upon his Poet-Ape that 'half-eyes' would know

... a fleece

From locks of wooll, or shreds from the whole peece,

and the real answer to the disintegrators lies in demonstrating that undeniable impression of unity and of a characteristic style which distinguishes most of the plays in the Shakespeare canon from those of his contemporaries.



# SHAKESPEARE'S TEXT

BY

A. W. POLLARD

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THE following editions of plays and poems by Shakespeare were published prior to the collected edition of his plays in the Folio of 1623. The text of editions marked \* is notably abridged and corrupt.

1593. *Venus and Adonis*. *R. Tuld*. Entered on Stationers' Register: April 18th. Dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. Reprinted: 1594, (1595<sup>2</sup>), 1596, 1599 (2 eds.), (1602<sup>2</sup>), "1602" (three later reprints so dated to avoid censorship), 1617, 1619.

1594. *Lucrece*. *R. Tuld*. Entered. May 9th. Dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. Reprinted 1598, 1600 (2 eds.), 1607, 1616.

1594. The most lamentable Roman tragedie of Titus Andronicus. (Anon.) *J. Dinter*, sold by *I. White & I. Milington*. Entered. February 6th. Reprinted 1600, 1611.

\*1594. The first part of The Contention betwixt the two famous houses of Yorke and Lancaster. (Anon.) *I. Cude for I. Milington*. Entered March 12th. Reprinted 1600, and again in 1619 with '*The True Tragedie*' as '*The Whole Contention betwene the two famous houses, Lancaster and Yorke*'. A memorial abridement of a text of *II Henry VI* not greatly differing from that of the Folio.

\*1595. The true tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke. (Anon.) *P. S[hort] for T. Milington*. Reprinted 1600 and again in 1619 with '*The first part*', as '*The Whole Contention*'. A memorial abridement of a text of *III Henry VI* not greatly differing from that of the Folio.

\*1597. An excellent conceited tragedie of Romeo and Juliet. (Anon.) *J. Dinter*.

1597. The tragedie of King Richard the Second. (Anon.) *V. Simms for A. Wise*. Entered August 29th. Reprinted 1598 (2 eds.), 1608 with additions to the Parliament scene (two issues), 1615.

1597. The tragedy of King Richard the Third. (Anon.) *V. Sims* for *A. Wise*. Entered: October 19th. Reprinted: 1598, 1602, 1605, 1612, 1622.

1598. The history of Henrie the Fourth: with the battell at Shrewsburie. (Anon.) *P. S[hort]* for *A. Wise*. Entered: February 25th. Reprinted: (Newly corrected by W. Shake-spere) 1599, 1604, 1608, 1613, 1622.

1598. A pleasant conceited comedie called Loues labors lost. Newly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespere. *W. W[hite]* for *C. Burby*. (Probably preceded by an unauthorised version similar to the *R. and J.* of 1597.) Not entered till 1607.

1599. The most excellent and lamentable tragedie of Romeo and Juliet. Newly corrected, augmented and amended. (Anon.) *T. Creede* for *C. Burby*. Reprinted in 1609 and without date (two issues, one with Shakespeare's name).

1600. The second part of Henrie the Fourth. *V. S[ims]* for *A. Wise* and *W. Aspley*. Entered: August 23rd. Two issues.

1600. A Midsommer Nights Dreame. *For T. Fisher*. Entered: October 8th. Reprinted with same date in 1619.

1600. The most excellent historie of the Merchant of Venice. *J. R[oberts]* for *T. Hyes*. Entered: July 22nd, 1598 and October 28th, 1600. Reprinted with same date in 1619.

1600. Much adoe about Nothing. *V. S[ims]* for *A. Wise* and *W. Aspley*. 'Staied' August 4th (1600). Entered: August 23rd.

\*1600. The cronicle history of Henry the Fift. *T. Creede* for *T. Millington* and *J. Busby*. 'Staied' August 4th (1600). Entered: August 14th. Reprinted in 1602 and (with the false date 1608) in 1619.

\*1602. A most pleasaunt and excellent conceited comedie, of Sy Iohn Falstaffe, and the Merrie Wives of Wind-or. *T. C[reed]* for *A. Johnson*. Entered and assigned January 18th. Reprinted 1619.

\*1603. The tragicall historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke. [*V. Sims*] for *N. L[ing]* and *J. Trundell*.

1604. The tragicall historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke. Newly imprinted and enlarged. *J. R[oberts]* for *N. L[ing]*. Entered to Roberts July 26th, 1602. Part of the edition dated 1605. Reprinted 1611 and without date.

1608. Mr. William Shak-spere: his true cronicle historie of the life and death of King Lear and his three daughters. *for N. Putter* and *are to be sold at the signe of the Pide Bull*. Entered to N. Butter and J. Busby November 26th, 1607. Reprinted with same date in 1619.

1609. The late and much admired play, called Pericies, Prince of

**Tyre.** By William Shakespeare. *For H. Gosson*, 1609. Two issues. Entered to E. Blount May 20th, 1608. Reprinted 1611 and 1619.

1609. The Historie of Troylus and Cresseida. As it was acted by the Kings Maesties seruants at the Globe. Written by William Shakespeare. *Imprinted by G. Eld for R. Boman and H. Walley.* Reissued with title-page cut away and replaced by a half-sheet (two leaves) with new title (*The Famous Historie of Troylus and Cresseid*, etc.) and an address beginning 'Eternall reader, you haue heere a new play, neuer stal'd with the Stage'. Entered to J. Roberts February 7th, 1603; to R. Boman and H. Walleys January 28th, 1609.

1609. Shakespeares Sonnets. Never before imprinted. *G. Eld for I. T[horpe] to be solde by J. Wright.* (Another issue with only 'to be solde by J. Wright')

1619. (Reprints by W. Jaggard for T. Pavier.) 'The Whole Contention betwene the two famous houses (etc. *For I. P.*', followed, with continuous 'signatures', by *Pericles, Prince of Tyre. Printed for I. P.* 1619 and several other reprints (with distinct signatures), all bearing a device with motto 'Heb Del u Heb Delm' owned in 1619 by William Jaggard, but some with their original imprint and date, known to have been bound together variously arranged. *A Tenthredine Tragedie, Printed for I. P.* 1619. *Merry Wives. Printed for Arthur Johnson*, 1619; *The Merchant of Venice, Printed by J. Roberts*, 1600; *A Midsummer nights dreame. Printed by J. Roberts*, 1600, and *King Lear. Printed for Nathaniel Butcher* 1603, *Henry V. Printed for I. P.* 1603, *See John Oldcastle.* Written by William Shakespeare. *London, printed for I. P.* 1600.

Owing to the volumes containing the plays having been broken up whenever they came to be sold the dates earlier than 1619 were accepted as correct, and the reprint of *The Merchant of Venice* was generally regarded as the First Edition.

1622. The tragedy of Othello, the Moore of Venice. *N. O[les] for T. Walkley.* Entered. October 6th, 1621.

There is no evidence that Shakespeare ever read the proofs of any edition of his plays or poems except the first of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrèce*, the personal dedications of which to his patron the Earl of Southampton entitle us to believe that he took an active part in their publication. It is probable that his annoyance at the appearance of incomplete and mangled versions of *Love's Labour's Lost* (conjectured to have been printed in or about 1597), *Roméo and Juliet* (1597) and *Hamlet* (1603) caused his fellow-actors to supply for publication the authentic

texts preserved in the quartos of *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598), of *Romeo and Juliet* (1599), and of *Hamlet* (1604). But until he himself and his learned friend Ben Jonson conferred on them prestige the unclassical plays presented in the public theatres were scarcely reckoned as literature. Many of them were patched together by three or four authors of little standing or reputation, who demanded payment for them in instalments during the few weeks in which they were being written.<sup>1</sup> Even as late as 1616 it was considered a presumption on the part of Jonson to issue a volume of plays as his *Works*. Shakespeare was then dead, and it is idle to speculate whether, if he had lived a few years longer, emulation of Jonson might have given us a First Folio which he had personally revised.

In the 'Address to the Reader' in the Folio of 1623 there is an often quoted allusion to the stolen and surreptitious copies with which readers had previously been abused. It is important to remember that the most challenging of these surreptitious editions, the *Hamlet* of 1603, disappeared absolutely from view until a copy was discovered in 1823 by Sir H. E. Bunbury at Barton, bound with other quartos. Thus when the serious study of Shakespeare's text began in the eighteenth century the allusion of the Folio editions to stolen and surreptitious copies had to be explained without it. The unhappy explanation accepted was that all the early quarto editions were being denounced in these terms, notwithstanding the recognition by Malone that the texts of several of the first editions in quarto were demonstrably better than those printed in 1623. In his *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*, published by Messrs Methuen in 1909, the present writer argued that the passage as to the badness of previous editions, when literally interpreted, did not involve a condemnation of more than *some* ('diverse') of the previous editions, and that its claim

<sup>1</sup> We read much of these impecunious playwrights in the accounts kept from February 1592 to 1603 by Philip Henslowe, a Sussex man, who settled in Southwark before 1577 in the employment of an estate manager (whose widow he married) and acquired much house property and land. He took part in building the Rose theatre in Southwark in 1587, and had an interest also in the Fortune in Cripplegate. He acted as a middleman between the players and playwrights, and entered in his 'diary' notes of his dealings with both.





*Prince of Denmarke.*

*Mar.* Is it not like the King?

*Hor.* As thou art to thy selfe,  
Such was the very armor he had on,  
When he the ambitious *Norway* combat'd.  
So frownd he once, when in an angry parle  
He smot the sleaded pollax on the yce,  
Tis strange.

*Polack*

*Mar.* Thus twice before, and iump at this dead hower,  
With Marshall stalke he passed through our watch.

*Hor.* In what particular to worke, I know not,  
But in the thought and scope of my opinion,  
This bodes some strange eruption to the state.

*Mar.* Good, now sit downe, and tell me he that knowes  
Why this same strikt and most obseruant watch,  
So nightly toyles the subiect of the land,  
And why such dayly cost of brazen Cannon  
And forraine marte, for implements of warre,  
Why such impresse of ship-writes, whose sore taske  
Does not diuide the Sunday from the weeke:  
What might be toward that this sweaty march  
Doth make the night ioynt labourer with the day,  
Who is't that can informe me?

*Hor.* Mary that can I, at least the-whisper goes so,  
Our late King, who as you know was by Forten-  
Brasse of *Norway*,  
Thereto prickt on by a most emulous cause, dared to  
The combate, in which our valiant *Hamlet*,  
For so this side of our knowne world esteemed him,  
Did slay this Fortenbrasse,  
Who by a scale compact well ratified, by law  
And heraldrie, did forfeit with his life all those  
His lands which he stoode seized of by the conqueror,  
Against the which a moiety competent,  
Was gaged by our King:  
Now sit, yong Fortenbrasse,  
Of inaproued mettle hot and full,

B 2

Hath

## *Prince of Denmarke.*

*Hora.* Stay, speake, speake, I charge thee speake. *Exit Ghost.*

*Mar.* Tis gone and will not answere.

*Hor.* Ho'n now *Horatio*, you tremble and looke pale  
Is not this something morethen phantasie?  
What thinke you-ont?

*Hora.* Before my God I might not this beleue,  
Without the fencible and true auouch  
Of mine owne eies.

*Mar.* Is it not like the King?

*Hora.* As thou art to thy selfe.  
Such was the very Armor he had on,  
When he the ambitious *Norway* combated,  
So frownd he once, when in an angry parle  
He smot the flegded pollax on the ice.  
Tis strange.

*Mar.* Thus twice before, and iump at this dead houre,  
With martiall stauke hath he gone by our watch.

*Hora.* In what perticular thought, to worke I know nor,  
But in the grosse and scope of mine opinion,  
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

*Mar.* Good now sit downe, and tell me he that knowes,  
Why this same strikt and most obseruant watch  
So nightly toiles the subiect of the land,  
And with such dayly cost of brazon Canuon  
And forraine marte, for implements of warre,  
Why such impresse of ship-writes, whose sore taske  
Does not deuide the Sunday from the weeke,  
What might be toward that this sweaty hast  
Doth make the night ioynt labourer with the day,  
Who ist that can informe mee?

*Hora.* That can I.  
At least the whisper goes so; our last King,  
Whose image euen but now appear'd to vs,  
Was as you knowe by *Fortinbrasse* of *Norway*,  
Thereto prickt on by a most emulate pride  
Dar'd to the combat; in which our valiant *Hamlet*,  
(For so this side of our knowne world esteemd him)  
Did slay this *Forinbrasse*, who by a scald compact  
Well ratified by lawe and heraldy

B 2

Did



that good texts had been substituted in the Folio for these restricted the criticised texts to the 1597 Quarto of *Romeo and Juliet* (with probably a lost edition of *Love's Labour's Lost* of the same year), the 1600 Quarto of *Henry V*, the 1602 of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and the 1603 of *Hamlet*. The argument in 1909 was supported by some contentions of doubtful validity, and needed supplementing, but it sufficed to gain for the phrases 'good quarto' and 'bad quarto' a definite place in the bibliography of Shakespeare.

The segregation of the 'bad' quartos into a class by themselves led to an intensive study of them, which has produced important results. The discredit for their production had previously been thrown on unscrupulous booksellers, supposed to have sent shorthand writers to the theatre to take down what they could of a play, their notes being afterwards patched together by a hack editor, despite the very great doubt as to whether shorthand in the reign of Queen Elizabeth was sufficiently developed to make piracy of this kind possible. Two famous allusions by Thomas Heywood<sup>1</sup> to piracies by means of shorthand notes, which may be good evidence for what was happening at the time (1605-8) of which he was writing, were taken as proof of what was happening several years earlier, and this view is still widely held in Germany.

On the other hand as early as 1880 in his preface to the facsimile of the 1603 *Hamlet* Dr Furnivall had pointed out that the accuracy of the speeches of Marcellus and Voltimarus suggested the use of 'some parts Lorcht or got from actors', and in 1900 in the Oxford reprint of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* (1602) Dr W. W. Greg (following H. C. Hart in the 'Arden' edition) had singled out as suspicious the excellence of the speeches of the Host of the Garter Inn. In 1923, in his *Two Elizabethan*

<sup>1</sup> In a prologue written in 1632 for a revival of his *If you know not me you know neither, or the Truities of Queen Elizabeth* in asserting (of the quarto of 1605) 'Some by Stenography drew The plot' put it in print (So we one word trewe), and in the preface to his *Locrine* (1606) 'There's some reason to believe that as to the first he was not taken, the play appearing to be rather a memorial reconstruction by actors in it than produced by stenography. But by 1608 stenography must be admitted, and it has been seriously maintained that the quarto *King Lear* of that year was produced in this way.'

*Stage Abridgments*, Dr Greg further argued that the printed text of Greene's *Orlando* (1594) could not be explained by any theory of successive corruptions by copyists, but must be due to the efforts of actors stranded in the provinces to reconstruct from memory a makeshift text of a play not in their repertory. In 1923 also Mr Crompton Rhodes in his 'tercentenary study' of *Shakespeare's First Folio* put forward (p. 83) a similar solution of the problem with courageous precision:

The only simple explanation of the four quartos is that (i) (each) was a prompt-book used by the strolling players, (ii) each was prepared by some actor who had played a part in Shakespeare's play in the Lord Chamberlain's Company in London, (iii) the basis of each version was this accurate part, the rest being constructed from memory, most fully in scenes where he had played, (iv) the traces of shorthand in certain plays is due to the pirate's dictation to a confederate, (v) the abridgment was less deliberate than determined by his failure of memory, (vi) the versions (except possibly *The Merry Wives*) were subsequent to the Folio versions, (vii) the stationers were not at all concerned in the piracy, but only in the printing.

At the back of Mr Rhodes's statement lay his knowledge that Sheridan's plays had been pirated in some such way in the eighteenth century (a parallel which Sheridan's contemporary George Steevens had adduced, but not pressed), and his own personal experiences of how plays can be 'vamped' by strolling actors. Not all upholders of an explanation of this kind would agree that the chief constructor had his own written part with him, but some such theory has obtained considerable acceptance in England, though not much as yet among foreign students.

The substitution of the theory of reconstruction from memory for that of shorthand notes has enabled Mr Peter Alexander to add to the four 'bad quartos' already mentioned those printed in 1594 and 1595 under the titles *The Contention betwixt the two famous houses of Yorke and Lancaster* and *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke*. In these he finds, not, as Malone had argued, the first drafts, mainly by other hands, of the plays printed in the Folio as *The Second (Third) Part of King Henry VI*, but imperfect and mangled versions of a text of these plays differing originally

very slightly from that of the Folio. Students who accept the memorial reconstruction explanation of the badness of the quartet, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry V*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Hamlet* generally accept it as applying also to these two additions. Mr Alexander's revival on similar lines of a contention, first put forward by S. Hickson in *Notes and Queries* in 1850, that *The Taming of A Shrew*, printed in 1504, is a perversion rather than a source of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, and not an earlier play on which *The Shrew* was based, has not won so much support.

Even while it had been most fashionable to denounce all the quarto texts as 'stolne and surreptitious' the experience of editors had extorted admission that some of these texts were good enough to have been printed from Shakespeare's manuscript or a careful copy of it. It must be supposed that they regarded all the good quartos as 'stolne' and all the bad ones as 'surreptitious', though if 'stolne' is to be taken as implying physical thefts of the books of plays from the theatre it is strange that no attempt was made to explain how these were carried out over a long period of years. A study of the Entries of Plays in the Stationer's Register<sup>1</sup> given by F. G. Fleay in Table ix of his *Chronicle History of the Life and Work of W. Shakespeare* (1906) or of the summary table of Printed Plays by Sir L. K. Chamberlain (*The Stationer's Company*, vol. iv, Appendix I), supplies clues which those acquainted with the theatrical history of the period can interpret. In the years 1536-9 there are no entries of plays; in the four years 1530-1 only five, in 1534 twenty-three, with seven more in the next year, in the four years 1596-9 eleven; in 1600 nineteen, with nine more in 1601, in 1602 and 1603 six. The peak figures for 1594 and 1600, with their respective after-maths in the following year, must be traced mainly to sales by the only possessors of numerous play-books, the companies for which plays were written. As to why sales were so high in these

<sup>1</sup> Entry on the Register kept by the Stationer's Company was required by its rules and secured the printer the exclusive right to print the book so entered. See Note at end of this chapter.

particular years Sir E. K. Chambers has offered neater explanations than those I had myself advanced, viz. that 'in 1594 the companies were reforming themselves after a long and disastrous spell of plague, and in particular the Queen's, Pembroke's and Sussex's men were all ruined, and their books were thrown on the market', while for the second large batch of sales 'reason might be found in the call for ready money involved by the building of the Globe in 1599 and the Fortune in 1600' (*Eliz Stage*, III, 184). It may also be noted that the putting on sale of the 'bad quartos' already enumerated was almost certainly responsible for the appearance not only of the good quartos by which they were severally replaced, but also for those of *Richard II* and *Richard III* of 1597, *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598) and *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *I and II Henry IV*, which together contributed five entries to the peak of 1600. In their uncertainty as to what mangled versions of their stock plays might be put into print Shakespeare's company may well have thought it better to take what money was offered for the right to publish a good text in each case than to withhold publication at the risk of being forestalled by the appearance of mangled and imperfect ones.

It would thus seem that down to the end of the reign of Elizabeth and a little later all the 'bad quartos' of plays by Shakespeare should be regarded as patched up in the provinces from memory by actors who had played in them in town, and sold on their return to printers or stationers who asked no questions; and all the good quartos as honestly purchased from the company which had acquired them to act in London. What was the probable character of these good texts? In earlier protests against the prevailing pessimism on this point I was content to argue from what we know as to the history of plays by other dramatists that there was a 'high probability' that *some* of them were printed from Shakespeare's own autograph manuscripts. In the absence, however, of evidence to the contrary there is a strong *a priori* argument that this is likely to have been the case as regards each individual play; for if there was no playhouse transcript then Shakespeare's autograph had no



competitor, while if a fair copy had been made in the playhouse, this would certainly have been regarded as the better manuscript to keep; and thus again the autograph becomes the probable source of the good quarto.

Have we any Shakespeare autograph by which this probability can be tested? In 1916 Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, who for many years before he became Director of the British Museum had been Keeper of its Department of Manuscripts and had made himself a great reputation as a palaeographer, after contributing a chapter on Shakespeare's autograph signatures to *Shakespeare's England*, produced a more exhaustive monograph entitled *Shakespeare's Handwriting* (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1916). In this he revived with greater authority and discrimination a theory broached mainly on literary grounds in 1871 by Richard Simpson in a paper entitled 'Are there any Extant Manuscripts in Shakespeare's handwriting?' contributed to *Notes and Queries* (Fourth Series, vol. viii), claiming that certain scenes in a manuscript play on Sir Thomas More in the Harleian collection at the British Museum were in Shakespeare's autograph. The play had been edited for the Shakespeare Society by Alexander Dyce in 1844, and, shortly before Thompson began his study, had been reproduced in collotype by J. S. Farmer in 1910 and edited in 1911 for the Malone Society by Dr W. W. Greg, who carefully distinguished all the five different hands found in it, while contenting himself with a rather wistful reference to Simpson's attribution to Shakespeare of hand D.

Thompson's argument for Shakespeare's authorship of the three pages was further developed in his contribution to *Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of 'Sir Thomas More'* (Cambridge University Press, 1923), in which he justified his 'general impression' (a recognised process in palaeography, of which he was specially a master) from the use simultaneously both in the signatures and the three pages of the same alternative forms of *a*, *e*, *h*, *k* and *p*, also of some exceptional forms, notably a peculiarly spurred *a*. His contentions were challenged in *The Booke of 'Sir Thomas*

*Moore*: a *bibliotic study* (New York, 1927), by Dr Samuel A. Tannenbaum, an able *advocatus diaboli*, who without denying the possibility of the identity of the two hands argued that the balance of evidence was against it. On the other hand Dr Greg, who had also closely checked and criticised Thompson's arguments, summed up the position in two articles in *The Times Literary Supplement* (November 24th and December 1st, 1927) with the three propositions:

1. The palaeographical case for the hands of S(hakespeare) and D being the same is stronger than can be made out for their being different.
2. The hand of S. is more nearly paralleled in D than in any other dramatic document known to us.
3. Setting S. aside, it can be shown that D was not written by any dramatist of whose hand we have adequate knowledge.

If the decision of the authorship of the three pages rested exclusively on palaeographic evidence, these propositions would not amount to proof, as against the possibility of an unknown writer. But in *Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of 'Sir Thomas More'* Professor J. Dover Wilson strengthened the argument by showing that the handwriting of the three pages helped to explain the misprints in the quartos and Folio, while he also worked out a similar argument based on spelling. He had grasped the fact that the printers of Shakespeare's day, on whom much unmerited scorn has often been cast, played a great part in simplifying and normalising the uncouth spellings of the sixteenth century. It seems natural, indeed, that being used to the simpler spelling of the university-trained clergy (who provided them with so much work in printing sermons and treatises) they should substitute this for the more archaic and individual spellings which came to them in other manuscripts. Thus where these archaic or individual spellings crop up now and again in print they must be debited to authors and not to the compositors. Wilson's theory has been tested by application to the few cases where an author's manuscript is available for comparison, and is now generally accepted. His success in finding in 'good' early

Shakespeare quartos parallels to all the archaic spellings in the three pages of *Sir Thomas More* was a new contribution to the proof of Shakespeare's authorship of them. To most students, however, the final proof probably lies in the masterly paper by Professor R. W. Chambers on 'The Expression of Ideas—particularly political ideas—in the "Three Pages" and in Shakespeare', since reinforced by his article 'Some Sequences of Thought in Shakespeare and in the 147 lines of "Sir Thomas More"' in the *Modern Language Review* for July 1931. Under Dr Chambers's guidance we can find in these lines a combination of three characteristics of Shakespeare which should be decisive: (i) a uniquely passionate conception of the necessity of respect for order and degree, which is most fully worked out in the great speech of Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida*, 1, iii, 75-137; (ii) a sympathetic understanding of the workings of uneducated minds, which can find humour in the strange logic evolved in crowds, as in the Jack Cade scenes in *II Henry VI*; (iii) a conviction that the most excited crowd can be swayed by oratory of the right kind, as in the first scene of *Coriolanus*, and the Forum scene in *Julius Caesar* (iii, ii). In fact Shakespeare had a technique of his own for crowd scenes, and a technique of his own in developing the argument for order and authority, and this technique,<sup>1</sup> in which the same phrases and ideas tend to recur, is so peculiar to himself that when, between *II Henry VI* at one end of the nineties and *Julius Caesar* and *Troilus* at the other, it is found in 1596 or a little earlier, in three autograph pages contributed to the play of *Sir Thomas More*, in a handwriting admittedly of the same kind as Shakespeare's, and unlike that of any of his known contemporaries, and with slightly archaic spellings, all of which recur sporadically in good texts of his plays, it seems pedantic to refuse to acknowledge that the contributor must have been Shakespeare himself.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> And also, as Professor Spurgeon has shown (*Rev. of Eng. Studies*, vi, 277), a very individual use of imagery.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that, in addition to the 147 lines on three pages which have been specially investigated, one further speech by More, 22 lines (Addition III) beginning 'It is in heaven that I am thus and thus', has also been claimed as Shakespeare's.

What do these three pages in Shakespeare's autograph tell us as to how he wrote his plays? In the first place they may be claimed as confirming the witness of his fellow-actors Heminge and Condell, in their address 'To the Great Variety of Readers' in the Folio of 1623, in which they wrote: 'His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers'. On two of the pages the ink has spread with the course of years so that they are not easy to read, but there are no noticeable blots, and the third page is beautifully clear, save for two and a half lines and an interlining heavily erased by the bookkeeper, who added an interlining of his own. As he wrote the other 144 lines, Shakespeare eighteen times struck out a word, or the beginning of a word, immediately after he had written it, following on at once with his second thought. Two of these corrections (ll. 72 and 79) indicate a slight pause, for in each case after writing 'yo<sup>r</sup>' he began to repeat the word (with 'y' and 'yo') before he added the substantive. Possibly we should find further evidence of pauses in the strange gaps in some words ('fo rbid', l. 96; 'o ffyc', l. 98; 'th' offendo r', l. 123; 'count ry', l. 126).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand in five lines he was thinking quicker than he could write, and we find him setting down a word, or part of one, prematurely (l. 35 'ar', l. 37 'but', l. 102 'le' of 'lent', l. 107 'ar', l. 129 'why yo<sup>u</sup>'). In nine other places the correction denotes a change of mind, and in another two he seems to have been troubled with his minims, beginning to write 'number' with 'mu' (l. 51) and writing 'in' instead of 'no' (l. 95). Six other corrections were not (or not necessarily) made immediately, being additions or substitutions by interlineation or in the margin. But, more especially in the first and second pages, the general impression is of a quick hand and a quicker brain, the five words prematurely written being specially noteworthy. It should be observed also that, while only two minim mistakes (one of them—'in' for 'no'—perhaps a doubtful

<sup>1</sup> This curious trick, rather than the loose locking of the quarto (suggested by Professor Dover Wilson) may explain the 'vene we' for 'venewe' in *Love's Labour's Lost*, v, i, 56.





instance) were corrected, there are six others (four with a stroke too few and two with a stroke too many) which were allowed to pass. These slips also probably denote speed.

On the other hand in ll. 112-14 this quick writer and thinker by an unassimilated interlineation ('in in to yo<sup>r</sup> obedienc') over l. 113, neglect of capitals and punctuation and writing a line and a half continuously, so puzzled the bookkeeper that he linked the first five words with the previous sentence and struck out, not only the interlineation, but the original two and a half lines, filling the gap with four words of his own devising, 'tell me but this'.<sup>1</sup> The passage suggests that the bookkeeper in Shakespeare's theatre may have done considerably more harm to the text of the plays than editors have guessed!

If Valentine Sims or any other reputable Elizabethan printer had been given the three pages of the 'More' manuscript to print, what would he have been likely to make of them? His compositor might have been puzzled by the absence of *e* final in 'straing' (strange) l. 8, 'offyc' (office) l. 98, 'ffraunc' (france) l. 127, the gaps we have noticed in a few words, the uncertain use of minims and the very scanty punctuation, which is most defective at the ends of lines and least at the breaks in them. He would, of course, have had to follow the bookkeeper in omitting the two and a half lines needlessly struck out, and printing his silly little insertion. But on the whole it may fairly be said that while the handwriting is in places difficult enough to make a compositor careful, it offered no insuperable obstacles to correct printing. At the same time if, with the help of the proof-corrector, he had set up any thirty lines of the 147 on these pages with only a single error, and that often of only a

<sup>1</sup> What Shakespeare left (besides the interlineation) was apparently:

to kneele to be forgiven  
*is safer uarrs, then ever yo<sup>u</sup> can make*  
*whose discipline is ryot; why even yo<sup>r</sup> hurly*  
*cannot proceed . at by obedience | ] what rebell captaine*  
 as mutynes ar incident, by his name  
 can still the rout [?] who will obey a traytor[?]

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The italicised words are those for which the bookkeeper substituted 'tell me but this'.

single letter, I think he would hardly be considered to have done badly. Now this, or possibly a little less than this, is the average of error in the play which in 1597, after entry on August 29th on the Stationers' Register<sup>1</sup> 'by appointment from Master Warden Man', was published with the title:

The Tragedie of King Richard the second. As it hath beene publicly acted by the right Honourable the Lorde Chamberlaine his Seruants... Printed by Valentine Simmes for Androw Wise, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules church yard at the signe of the Angel.

This, unless we are to except the *Titus Andronicus* of 1594, which is usually thought to have only been 'touched' by Shakespeare, was the first play wholly by him to be printed in a 'good' quarto.<sup>2</sup> It was reprinted twice in 1598 and subsequently in 1608 and 1615. If we follow its history we shall get a fair idea both of the standard of goodness attained in a good text and of what might happen to it by way first of deterioration and subsequently of restoration.

The printing of *Richard II* in 1597 started badly, since (on nine different pages and on the front or back of eight different sheets) no fewer than seventeen misprints were not corrected until part of the total number of copies which formed the edition had been printed off. This happened again when *King Lear* was being printed, and the different states in which some of the sheets were found led for a time to a belief that they belonged to two different editions.

The First Quarto of *Richard II* and the two reprints of the following year (1598) suffered also from the omission, whether by order of the licenser or from fear of trouble, of 165 lines (iv, i, 154-318, 'May it please you, lords... by a true king's fall') usually called the 'Deposition scene'. The omission was inaccurately supplied, probably from a shorthand report, in the quartos of 1608 and 1615, and accurately in the Folio of 1623.

The First Quarto and its successors have no division into acts, nor are the scenes marked by headings; they usually, but not

<sup>1</sup> For the importance of these entries see Note at the end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 267.



always, end with the word *Exeunt*, denoting a clear stage. When several characters leave, but the scene is continued, this is often indicated by the word *Manent* (or *Manet*) with the names of those who remain.

The play of *King Richard the Second* as printed in this first quarto contains 2581 lines. The editors of the (old) *Cambridge Shakespeare* edited by J. Glover (vol. 1), W. G. Clark (vols. II-IX) and W. A. Wright (1863-6) (second ed. by W. A. Wright, 1891) rejected sixty-nine of its readings, in addition, of course, to mere typographical flaws, or on an average one reading in every 37.4 lines. I should myself reverse the verdict in a few cases, and about a dozen others might fairly be reckoned as matters of spelling. A majority of the rest are errors in a single letter or transpositions. Most of the errors are obvious at sight, and all but twenty (including some of the doubtful ones) were corrected anonymously in printing offices before the end of the seventeenth century.

Unfortunately while almost every printer corrected some of the mistakes of his predecessor, every printer added some, mostly more, of his own.

Valentine Sims, who did so well in the first edition, corrected fourteen errors in his second (1598) and added 123 new ones. In his third edition (also printed in 1598) he corrected eight of the original errors and partly corrected another, and three of the newer ones, but added thirty-five. In 1608 in a new edition printed by W. W. (William White) for Matthew Law, who had acquired the copyright in 1603, three errors were corrected (two original and one later) and eighteen more introduced, the text also being enlarged by an imperfect report of the lines omitted in the previous editions. In 1615 White corrected one of his own mistakes, and introduced thirty-eight others. Finally the Folio of 1623 corrected 145 errors and added just 100.<sup>1</sup> The fact that

<sup>1</sup> Compare with this analysis of the textual history of a play for which the Folio printer used a late quarto Professor Dover Wilson's calculation that in printing from the only quarto of *Love's Labour's Lost* the Folio printer corrected 117 errors, reproduced 59 and added 137. In the similar case of *Much Ado about Nothing* Professor Wilson found among 141 Folio variants from the single Quarto only accepts seventeen!

the Folio prints about three times as many errors in *Richard II* as the First Quarto needs to be emphasised in condemnation of the fairly numerous handsome editions of Shakespeare in which the Folio text is followed throughout; but it should not lead to pessimism as to the text of plays in which the Folio is based on a manuscript copy. Valentine Sims, who introduced 123 new errors in the Second Quarto (correcting fourteen old ones) was the same printer, and may have been employing the same compositor, who had set up the First Quarto the year before, with sixty-nine. It is quicker to print from print because the compositor, instead of spelling out his copy, can take in a whole line at a glance, and in the two minutes occupied by setting up the seven or eight words in a decasyllabic line one or more of those he carries in his head may insensibly be altered before he puts them into type. In setting up from manuscript the compositor would take fewer words at a time, and, as there is no reason to suppose that Jaggard's standard was lower than that of Sims, we may hope that in the previously unprinted plays for which the Folio is the sole authority, the average accuracy was as high as in the First Quarto of *Richard II*, i.e. one error, often insignificant, in a little over thirty lines.

Readings first found in any quarto after the first<sup>1</sup> cannot be attributed to the intervention of the author, but must be regarded as good or bad emendations, or misprints. The recurrence in the Folio of a reading found for the first time in one of the late quartos throws on an editor the task of deciding whether it is a good emendation confirmed by the prompt-copy, or a bad emendation, or a printer's error, left uncorrected in the (usually late) quarto used as copy when the Folio was being printed. In the second or third case the repetition in the Folio of an error or peculiarity of spelling or any similar detail becomes evidence as to the quarto edition used as copy for the play in which it occurs. In this way it has been shown that the 1558 Heyes Quarto was used as copy for the Folio text of *Love's*

<sup>1</sup> There is a possibility, where only a few copies of a first edition are extant, that a second edition may preserve a correction made in some copies of the *editio princeps*, of which none now survives.



*The Historie of King Lear.*

Our deereſt *Regan*, wife to *Cornwell*, ſpeake?

*Reg.* Sir I am made of the ſelfe ſame mettall that my ſiſter is,  
And prize me at her worth in my true heart,  
I find ſhe names my very deed of loue, onely ſhe came ſhort,  
That I profeſſe my ſelfe an enemy to all other ioyes,  
Which the moſt precious ſquare of ſence poſſeſſes,  
And find I am alone felicitate, in your deere highnes loue.

*Cord.* Then poore *Cord.* & yet not ſo, ſince I am ſure  
My loues more richer then my tongue.

*Lear.* To thee and thine hereditarie euer  
Remaine this ample third of our faire kingdome,  
No leſſe in ſpace, validity, and pleaſure,  
Not that confirm'd on *Gonorill*, but now our ioy,  
Although the laſt, not leaſt in our deere loue,  
What can you ſay to win a third, more opulent  
Then your ſiſters.

*Cord.* Nothing my Lord. (againe.

*Lear.* How, nothing can come of nothing, ſpeake

*Cord.* Vnhappie that I am, I cannot heaue my heart into my  
mouth, I loue your Maieſtie according to my bond, nor more nor  
leſſe.

*Lear.* Goe to, goe to, mend your ſpeech a little,  
Leaſt it may mar your fortunes.

*Cord.* Good my Lord,  
You haue begot me, bred me, loued me,  
I returne thoſe duties backe as are right fit.  
Obey you, loue you, and moſt honour you,  
Why haue my ſiſters huſbands if they ſay they loue you all,  
Happely when I ſhall wed, that Lord whoſe hand  
Muſt take my plight, ſhall cary halfe my loue with him,  
Halfe my care and duty, ſure I ſhall neuer  
Mary like my ſiſters, to loue my father all.

*Lear.* But goes this with thy heart?

*Cord.* I good my Lord.

*Lear.* So yong and ſo vtender.

*Cord.* So yong my Lord and true.

*Lear.* Well let it be ſo, thy truth then bethy dower,  
For by the ſacred radiance of the Sunne,

Our deereſt *Regan*, wife of *Cornwall*?

*Reg.* I am made of that ſelfe-mettle as my Siſter,  
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart,  
I finde ſhe names my very deede of loue:  
Onely ſhe comes too ſhort, that I profeſſe  
My ſelfe an enemy to all other ioyes,  
Which the moſt precious ſquare of ſenſe profeſſes,  
And finde I am alone felicitate  
In your deere Highneſſe loue.

*Cor.* Then poore *Cordelia*,  
And yet not ſo, ſince I am ſure my loue's  
More ponderous then my tongue.

*Lear.* To thee, and thine hereditarie euer,  
Remaine this ample third of our faire Kingdome,  
No leſſe in ſpace, validitie, and pleaſure  
Then that conſerr'd on *Generill*. Now our Ioy,  
Although our laſt and leaſt; to whoſe yong loue,  
The Vines of France, and Milke of Burgundie,  
Striue to be intereſt. What can you ſay, to draw  
A third, more opilent then your Siſters? ſpeake.

*Cor.* Nothing my Lord.

*Lear.* Nothing?

*Cor.* Nothing.

*Lear.* Nothing will come of nothing, ſpeake againe.

*Cor.* Vnhappie that I am, I cannot heaue  
My heart into my mouth: I loue your Maieſty  
According to my bond, no more nor leſſe.

*Lear.* How, how *Cordelia*? mend your ſpeech ah little,  
Leaſt you may marre your Fortunes.

*Cor.* Good my Lord,  
You haue begot me, bred me, lou'd me.  
I returne thoſe duties backe as are right fit,  
Obey you, Loue you, and moſt Honour you.  
Why haue my Siſters Huſbands, if they ſay  
They loue you all? Happily when I ſhall wed,  
That Lord, whoſe hand muſt take my plight, ſhall carry  
Halfe my loue with him, halfe my Care, and Dutie,  
Sure I ſhall neuer marry like my Siſters.

*Lear.* But goes thy heart with this?

*Cor.* I my good Lord.

*Lear.* So young, and ſo vtender?

*Cor.* So young my Lord, and true.

*Lear.* Let it be ſo, thy truth then be thy dowre:  
For by the ſacred radiance of the Sunne,



*Labour's Lost*, the 1600 (the only quarto) for *Much Ado about Nothing*, the 1608 Quarto with sheets H and K in an uncorrected state for *King Lear*, the 1609 Quarto for *Romeo and Juliet*, the 1611 Quarto for *Titus Andronicus*, the 1619 Jaggard Quarto with false imprint and date (1600) for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In most, possibly all, of these cases the copy of the quarto used for this purpose must be supposed to have been taken to the theatre, and there corrected with the aid of whatever was being used as a prompt-copy (for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* possibly a marked copy of the Quarto of 1600), and then given to the printer. He, poor man, had to be content with what was thus given him, without asking for further help from the theatre, and is fairly frequently found tinkering out of his own head and tinkering wrongly.<sup>1</sup>

Where no quarto was available for reprinting, if two manuscripts were kept at the theatre the printer would naturally be given the one considered the worse, which might be, as in *Henry V*, *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare's original manuscript, in preference to a fair copy made for the use of the prompters and marked with his notes. If only one copy existed, possibly because Shakespeare's autograph had been clear enough to use as a prompt-copy, this would be specially transcribed for the printer, as may have been the case with *As You Like It*, *Julius Caesar* and *Twelfth Night*. If there were no prompt-copy in existence it has been suggested independently by Professor Dover Wilson and Mr Crompton Rhodes, that the text of a play may have been reconstructed from the 'parts' given to individual players, with the aid of the 'plot', or schedule of the successive scenes and of the actors in each of

<sup>1</sup> A well-known example is in *I Henry IV*, v, iii, 11:

1598 Q: I was not born a yielder, thou proud Scot.

1613 Q: I was not born to yield, thou proud Scot.

Folio: I was not born to yield, thou haughty Scot.

So again, *Richard III*, i, i, 65:

1597 Q: That tempts him to this extremity.

Later Q/Q: That tempts him to this extremity.

Folio: That tempts him to this harsh extremity.

I have already used these examples elsewhere, but there are others!

them, hung up in the theatre for each actor to know when to go on the stage. Such an origin would account for the absence of stage directions and the massing of the names of all the actors present in a scene at the head of it, found in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Winter's Tale*. But this theory has been hotly contested.

As the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays the Folio of 1623 acquired no small prestige, and it is perhaps not surprising that in the three reprints of 1632, 1663-4 and 1685 the same cumbrous form was retained. Each reprint can be proved to have been printed from its immediate predecessor, and to have corrected some obvious errors in it, while adding new ones of its own. Little work has been done on them, for the excellent reason that any results obtained must be concerned only with the history of the text and can hardly contribute to its further improvement. In his edition of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1859 Tycho Mommsen suggested that an unknown corrector of the Second Folio attempted to improve the rhythm; in 1902 Mr C. Alphonso Smith maintained that it was with syntax that the editor was concerned. The only serious examination of this Folio known to me was contributed by Professor Allardyce Nicoll to the *Studies in the First Folio*, by members of the Shakespeare Association (1921) in a section entitled 'The Editors of Shakespeare from First Folio to Malone'. In this he discredits the existence of any general principle in the changes made, but (i) attributes to the printer's reader the modernisation of spelling and also the correction of the colloquial usages of 'who' and 'whom' and of the dropping of the final *t* in the second person singular of verbs after *d* and *t*, and of the use of singular verbs with plural substantives, both in the text and the *Exit* and *Manet*, for *Exeunt* and *Manent* of some stage directions. In six plays, *I Henry VI* (22 improvements), *Romeo and Juliet* (17), *II Henry VI* (11), *III Henry VI* (8), *Titus Andronicus* (7), *The Winter's Tale* (7), he finds traces (ii) of the student of metre who had attracted the attention of Tycho Mommsen. Another haphazard reviewer (iii) interested himself in the stage directions of most of the comedies (but *not* of *Much*



*Ado about Nothing*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Twelfth Night*), and also (iv) with five tragedies (*Titus Andronicus*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*) in which he sedulously set right the forms of Greek and Latin proper names. Probably the authors of improvements (ii) and (iv) were amateurs who placed the notes they had made for their own amusement at the disposal of the printer. The total of the improvements made is considerable.

The Third Folio is notable for having added as an afterthought to the thirty-six plays of its predecessors that of *Pericles*, which had been printed in quarto in 1609, and as a second afterthought (distinguished by the sheets of this addition having yet another set of 'signatures') six other plays, two of which, *The London Prodigall* (1605) and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608), had borne 'Written by William (or W) Shakespeare' on their titles while he was still at work in London, and three others, *Lochnie* (1595), *Thomas Lord Cromwell* (1602 and 1613) and *The Purdane* (1607), more innocently, the initials W. S. The sixth, *Sir John Oldcastle* (1600), had no assertion of this kind, and the names of its real authors 'Mr Monday, Mr Drayton, and Mr Wilson and Hathway' happen to be inscribed in Henslowe's *Diary* as receivers of £10 in payment for the First Part and in earnest of the Second. In their texts both this Third Folio and its successor in 1685, the Fourth, are reported as following the course of correcting some old misprints and making new ones, with modernisation of the spelling.

So far the text had been in the hands of printers, with possibly some help from readers of Shakespeare among their friends. In 1709 after the clumsy Fourth Folio (a taller volume than its predecessors by nearly an inch, and somewhat wider) had held the market for twenty-four years, appeared the first modern edition, printed in six volumes, crown octavo, with an engraved frontispiece to every play, showing a scene apparently as the artist thought it might be represented on the contemporary stage, and edited by Nicholas Rowe, himself a successful dramatist. If we may judge from the very useful lists of readings

accepted by modern editors appended by Professor Dover Wilson to his facsimiles of single plays from the First Folio (Faber and Faber), quantitatively Rowe had no rival except the team of improvers of 1632, with Theobald as a not too bad third. For *Macbeth* he heads the list with sixteen emendations, including a change of a single letter in i, vii, 47, which gives us Macbeth's

I dare do all that may become a man,  
Who dares do more, is none,

where the Folio reads unhappily 'Who dares *no* more'! So again in ii, i, 56-8 Macbeth's imprecation stands in the Folio

Thou sowre and firme-set Earth  
Heare not my steps, which they may walke, for feare  
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,

and it was Rowe who turned 'which they may walke' to 'which way they walke', leaving it, however, to Capell to transmute 'sowre' into 'sure'. Rowe also in iv, iii, 235 lets Malcolm comment on Macduff's outburst 'This tune goes manly', where the Folio for 'tune' reads 'time'. Whether he was right in i, iii, 97-8 in reading

... as thick as hail  
Came post with post

for the Folio's

... as thick as Tale  
Can post with post,

modern timidity may feel less than certain. The most famous emendation in all Shakespeare's text, Theobald's 'and a' babld of green fields', for 'and a table of greene fields', continued to excite doubts until scholarship was assured of Shakespeare's frequent colloquial use of *a* for *he*, of the approximate identity of 'babld' with 'table' in an English hand of Shakespeare's day and the frequency with which, like other poets, he dropped the *e* in the *ed* of a past participle.

Pope in his *Shakespeare* (1725) paid special attention to rhythm and punctuation and might be ranked high among Shakespeare's editors had he not relegated passages he disliked to the margin, and even omitted some offending lines altogether.

Capell by his special study of the early quartos became the last of the prolific improvers. After him it is rare to find any of the other notable eighteenth-century editors, Johnson, Steevens or Malone, contributing more than a single accepted emendation in a play. In the nineteenth century new emendations did not altogether cease (some meddlers produced sheaves of them), but as succeeding editors sedulously omitted them from their texts their only result was to increase the tediousness of footnotes. Misprints are occasionally made by a compositor who has struggled with an ill-written word letter by letter, and these may be solved by a knowledge of Shakespeare's vocabulary and checked by a knowledge of his handwriting; thus misprints of this kind are still from time to time being corrected. But when an impatient bookkeeper struck out two and a half lines of Shakespeare's text and inserted a half-line of his own, or when a word was omitted in the corrected copy brought from the theatre to the printer of the Folio and the printer had to supply it out of his head, no knowledge of Shakespeare's handwriting will avail to recover what Shakespeare wrote, and it is perhaps well to prefer the old error to choosing between rival modern conjectures. Yet other bad readings may well have originated in slips of Shakespeare's own making, and these also may be beyond correction. Thus a perfect text of his plays is unattainable, yet it may well be doubted whether the texts now circulating would not have seemed to Shakespeare miracles of correctness; and there is little evidence that their shortcomings in any way obstruct enjoyment and appreciation of his genius.

The great edition of the nineteenth century was the *Cambridge Shakespeare* of 1863-6, built up (among the books which Capell collected and bequeathed to Trinity College, Cambridge) by editors of marvellous patience and great learning. Their patience was perhaps too great, for their notes are burdened by too copious a record of second-rate conjectures which they might well have ignored. But their services to scholarship were very great, and through the simultaneous issue of the 'Globe' edition (1864) produced the nearest approach to a standard 'Shakespeare' there has ever been. Their own achievement, however,

prompted a new start, which took form in the really useful spadework which underlay the eccentricities of the New Shakespeare Society, in the facsimiles of Shakespeare quartos superintended by F. J. Furnivall and the valuable prefaces contributed to several of them by P. A. Daniel. In the present century these have been followed by the Oxford Facsimile of the First Folio by collotype and Messrs Methuen's of all four Folios by photo-zincography, and quite recently by the delightfully handy facsimiles of ten separate Folio texts by Messrs Faber and Faber. Scholars to-day, wherever these helps are available, are as well off as Clark and Wright were amid the Capell books at Trinity College. With a knowledge of Shakespeare's handwriting and spelling added to the student's equipment new work can still be done, more than three centuries after the issue of the First Folio, and how interesting that work can be is seen in *The New Shakespeare* edited by Professor J. Dover Wilson. This is easily the most exciting ever printed, and one which has benefited not only by modern helps to emendation but perhaps even more, on the conservative side, by the completion of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which often unties knots without the surgery of conjecture.

## NOTE

The Stationers' Company of London had been formed out of two earlier companies in 1464, and from early in the sixteenth century printers are known to have belonged to it. On May 4th, 1557, it was incorporated by a royal charter, with privileges which gave the government almost complete control over the book trade. Only members of the Company were allowed to print, and every book licensed had to be entered on the Company's register. The procedure for licensing was cumbrous until 1536, when an order of the Star Chamber placed it in the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who on June 30th, 1538, issued a list of his authorised deputies. All regulations for licensing tended to weaken in quiet times, and it is probable that the master and wardens sometimes exceeded their powers of acting as licensers for unimportant books, but in 1599 there was another return to stringency with an order that 'Noe English historyes be printed excepte they bee allowed by some of her Maiesties

privie Counsell; (&) that noe playes be printed excepte they be allowed by suche as have aucthoritie'. In 1607 the authority for licensing plays was vested in the Master of the Revels, *ex officio*, the Master in that year being Edmund Tilney, an old man in bad health, who was soon after succeeded by his nephew and deputy Sir George Buc. In May 1622 Buc in turn was succeeded, owing to ill health, by Sir John Ashley or Astley, whose deputy, Sir Henry Herbert, held the office till 1642, and again after the Restoration. It was the licenser's duty to see that no play was acted which was politically dangerous, or offensive to the home government or to the ambassadors of friendly Courts; also from 1606 to eliminate profane oaths or the irreverent use of the name of God. Hence the frequent substitution of 'Heaven' in the Folio of 1623 where earlier texts print 'God'.

By their formation into a Company with a monopoly of printing for the whole of England, save for what was produced by the University Presses at Cambridge (from 1583) and Oxford (from 1585), the London Stationers were protected from outside competition, and their own regulations obliged them to respect the rights of the member to whose name a book was entered in its register, the fee for entrance being at first 4*d.*, afterwards 6*d.*, for each book. No provision was made for safeguarding the rights of anyone not a member of the Company. The nobleman, as whose servants a company of players held their right to act in public, would be their natural protector in such matters; but we do not hear of these patrons being called on for help. When, however, in 1619 William Jaggard printed, among other books to which he gave false dates (see p. 263), an edition of *The Merchant of Venice* which had been entered in 1600 to Thomas Heyes, while Thomas's son Laurence successfully established his rights in the book by appeal to the Stationers' Company, the players (it has been plausibly conjectured) procured from the Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, a letter to the Master and Wardens (to which his brother and successor referred in a similar letter of his own in June 1637) bidding them take order for the stay of further impressions of any of the plays or interludes of His Majesty's Servants without their consent; and this intervention seems to have had considerable effect.

The protection offered to its members by the Company of Stationers sometimes took strange forms. Dr Greg (*The Library*, 4th ser. vi, 47-53) has made it probable that in 1592 Abel Jelles, having printed at some date before August of that year a 'bad' quarto (no longer extant) of *The Spanishe Tragedie*, by registering it, on October 6th, some time after publication, was able to induce the Stationers'

Company to confiscate a 'good' text printed by Edward White, presumably with the leave of the players who owned it, so that White could only use his rights in his text by engaging Jelles to print it for him to publish. On this precedent, if *The First Part of the Contention* be accepted as a 'bad' quarto of *II Henry VI*, the registration of it by T. Millington on March 12th, 1594, which seems to have carried with it protection for its continuation, *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke*, published the following year, would have stood in the way of Shakespeare's company replacing it by a better text; and the registration of the bad *Henry V* by T. Pavier on August 4th (1600), and of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* by J. Busby with transfer on the same day to Arthur Johnson, had a like effect. On the other hand Danter's timidity in not registering the 'bad' *Romeo and Juliet* of 1597 enabled the players to replace it by the edition of 1599, and the entry of *Hamlet* by James Roberts in 1602 kept the road clear for the issue of the good quarto of 1604, though it did not prevent the issue of the 'bad' one of 1603. No reason is known why, instead of calling on the Stationers' Company to confiscate the 1603 edition, Roberts took his own better text to the publisher of it! Students of these matters must be prepared to live and learn, for they are not quite cleared up yet.

### NOTE ON THE FACSIMILES

The reproduction facing p. 274 is from Harley MS. 7368 in the British Museum, being taken from the block made for *Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of 'Sir Thomas More'* (Cambridge University Press, 1923). Note the immediate deletions in ll. 128, 129, proving it an autograph, the absence of punctuation at the ends of lines (save after 137), the *m* for *un* in 140, and the space between the fifth and sixth letters in 'count ry' (l. 126).

The facsimiles between pp. 266-7 and 278-9 are from British Museum copies of the *Hamlet* quartos of 1603 and 1605 and *Lear* (1608). In the 1603 quarto note the excellence of the text when Marcellus is speaking and the mislining and omissions in the subsequent speech by Horatio. The 1605 quarto gives a good text, probably from Shakespeare's manuscript, though, if so, the compositor may have marred it by glances at that of 1603. In the *Lear* quarto note the mislinings and omissions which cause it to be suspected as a report, probably by shorthand. Opposite are shown the corresponding lines from the recto and verso of sig. qq 2 of the Folio of 1623. Note that the half-line 'to loue my father all' is omitted from the Folio, and that 'speec ah little' shows the accidents which could occur in passing a page through the press.

# SHAKESPEARIAN CRITICISM

## I. FROM DRYDEN TO COLERIDGE

BY

T. S. ELIOT

I do not propose in this brief sketch to offer a compendium of all that has been written about Shakespeare in three languages in the period I have to cover. For that the reader may turn to Mr Augustus Ralli's *History of Shakespearean Criticism* (Oxford: 2 volumes). The purpose of a contribution on 'Shakespeare Criticism' to such a volume as this, as it seems to me, should be to provide a plan, or pattern, for the reading of the principal texts of Shakespeare criticism. Such a vast amount there is, such a sum of Shakespeare criticism increasing every day at compound interest, that the student of Shakespeare may well wonder whether he should consume his time over Shakespeare criticism at all. The first step, therefore, in offering a scheme of Shakespeare criticism is to give a reason why the student of Shakespeare should read what has been written about him. The second step is to make points of emphasis to show why he should read certain things first, and other things second; rather than occupy himself industriously reading everything that has been written about Shakespeare with equal attention and in perfect chronological order.

Why then, to begin with, should we read all that has been written about Shakespeare, in three hundred years, merely because we want to understand Shakespeare? Should we not rather just soak ourselves in the poetry and drama of Shake-

sppeare, and produce our own opinions, unaided and unencumbered by antiquity, about Shakespeare? But when a poet is a great poet as Shakespeare is, we cannot judge of his greatness unaided; we need both the opinions of other poets, and the diverse views of critics who were not poets, in order to help us to understand. Every view of Shakespeare is an imperfect, because a partial, view. In order to understand these views, we need something more than a good memory. In order to make a pattern of Shakespeare criticism, we need to have some conception of the function of criticism. It is quite impossible to make anything of the history of Shakespeare criticism, unless we can come to some understanding of criticism in general. We have first to grasp what criticism is, and second to grasp the relation between literary and philosophical criticism on the one hand, and literary and textual criticism on the other. With the history of textual criticism, with our increasing knowledge of Shakespeare, of his times, of his texts, of his theatre, I am not to be concerned; but I am concerned with (among other things) the general formulation of the relation between our literary criticism and our scholarly knowledge. In the history of the criticism of Shakespeare which is primarily or strictly literary and dramatic there is a certain 'progress', but only such progress as is possible as a result of the improved texts, the increased knowledge about the conditions of the Elizabethan stage, about the life of Shakespeare himself, and about the times in which he lived. Otherwise, it would be imprudent to say that we are approximating towards a final goal of understanding, after which there will be nothing new to be said; or retrospectively, to assume that A. C. Bradley's criticism of Shakespeare is 'better' than that of Dryden. Shakespeare criticism will always change as the world changes.

This point is really a very simple one, and easy to accept when our eye is on the history of criticism in general; but when we are confining our attention to the history of the criticism of a single great poet like Shakespeare, it is easy to slip into a different assumption. We find it difficult, of course, to believe that the view of Shakespeare to be taken 100 years hence can



be very different from our own. On the other hand, we are inclined to assume that the criticism of Shakespeare written before the nineteenth century is less illuminating than that written since. Neither assumption is quite true. There is undeniably an aspect in which early criticism may be seen as the substructure of that of the nineteenth century. We have to admit that the fuller understanding of Shakespeare's greatness came slowly, just as it comes slowly, I believe, in the life of the individual reader. But Shakespeare criticism cannot be appreciated without some understanding of the time and of the place in which it is written, without allowing for its nearness or remoteness in place or time from the object, and for its inevitable development in the future. The views of Shakespeare taken by different men at different times in different places form an integral part of the development and change of European civilisation during the last 300 years. Furthermore, in this study we should, I think, take an attitude which is represented by the popular word *Gestalt* or, as we might say, 'pattern'. That is, we should not begin by the attempt to decide which Shakespeare critics are most illuminating, and ignore the rest; what we have to study is the whole pattern formed by Shakespeare criticism from his own time to ours. In tracing this pattern, certainly, we must study some critics more closely than others, and we may for practical purposes select certain critics who serve to determine the main outline of the pattern; but it should be the whole pattern rather than the individual critic, in which we interest ourselves.

For this reason I shall not attempt, in this space, a compendious history of the subject. I shall simply select certain critics, according to the principle I have indicated above, and leave the reader to fill in the gaps by his own reading. There are obvious points of triangulation. First, there is the testimony of Shakespeare's contemporaries, of which, making due allowance for personal bias, that of Ben Jonson may be our specimen. Second, there is the criticism of the age of Dryden, regarding which, again, we make due allowance for the singular individual genius of Dryden. This is a period in which there is still a criti-

cism of the *acted* play (as Pepys's *Diary* attests); when—so far as the distinction holds—there is still dramatic as well as literary criticism; it is still a period in which criticism is directly in simple relation to the object, in contrast with modern criticism which is necessarily as much in relation to other criticism as to the work of Shakespeare itself. In the time of Pope and his contemporaries we feel at once the greater distance of time between the critic and the object, and we begin to feel that criticism has already to take account of criticism as well as of the object criticised. (This period, by the way, has been somewhat maligned: there is no period in which Shakespeare has not been treated with the greatest respect.) Against this, we must offset the critical views of the French in the eighteenth century, where we find, not so much the conflict of one dramatic type with another, as the conflict of English drama with a critical theory which was *not contradicted* by French practice. The French views of the eighteenth century—for example those of Voltaire, Diderot and La Harpe—have again to be compared with the other French views of the nineteenth century—as those of Taine and Victor Hugo. Meanwhile we find English criticism modified, during the later part of the eighteenth century, by the development of the sentimental attitude. English criticism of the greater part of the nineteenth century is very largely a development from the work of Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt and De Quincey; amongst these the influence of Coleridge is very much the most significant; and the explanation of Coleridge is partly found in the German critical thought of the latter part of the eighteenth century.

The student of Shakespeare criticism will be aware of all these views and developments, will endeavour to appreciate their appropriateness each to its place and time, their relations to each other, their limitations of time and cultural sympathy, and will consequently recognise that at different places and times criticism has different work to do. The contemporary of the poet has both obvious limitations and obvious advantages; he is too near to the object to see it clearly or in perspective; his judgment may be distorted by enthusiasm or prejudice; on the

other hand he enjoys the advantage of a freshness unspoilt by generations of other men's views. The later critic has both to try to see the object as if for the first time, without the direction of the criticism which has intervened; and also, as I have said, previous criticism is itself a part of the object of his criticism. Hence the critic's problem becomes for every generation more complicated; but also, every generation has a better opportunity for realising how complicated the problem is. At one time, the critical task may be the elaboration of a kind of criticism already initiated; at another, its refutation; at another, the introduction of a new theory, that is to say the exposition of an aspect hitherto overlooked; or again, it may be to combine and to display the pattern afforded by the diverse voices. And in this Shakespeare pattern everything laudatory must find a place, when it is a true praise not previously sounded; and everything derogatory too, even when blunted by misunderstanding, so long as it evinces the temper of an age or a people, and not merely a personal whim.

Of the contemporary comment upon Shakespeare it is that of Ben Jonson which is best remembered and most quoted; and with justice, as Jonson not only had the finest critical mind of his day, but as a dramatist and poet is of so different a kind from Shakespeare that his opinion has a peculiar interest. We may incline to think that Shakespeare's contemporaries underestimated his accomplishment, and were blind to his genius; forgetting that greatness is in a sense the result of time. It has again and again been illustrated that the opinion of contemporaneity is imperfect; and that even when it shows intelligent appreciation and enjoyment, it is apt surprisingly to elevate some quite insignificant figure above a very great one. Our opinions of our own contemporaries will probably seem grotesque to the future. I believe that if I had lived in the seventeenth century, it is quite likely that I should have preferred Beaumont and Fletcher to Shakespeare; though my estimate of their difference to-day is enough to satisfy the most fanatical Shakespearian. What I wish to do is to remove the *stigma* of being a contemporary, and to deprecate the complacency which attaches to being a member of posterity.

And I certainly do not mean to confound all distinctions, or to allow easily all opinions to be right. Whenever Dryden mentions Shakespeare, Dryden's opinion must be treated with respect. To understand his view of Shakespeare we must read all of his critical writing. And in particular, in weighing Dryden's opinions, we must spend some time over his collocation of Shakespeare and Fletcher, we must try to come to a point of understanding at which we *see* why it was natural and proper for him to make this frequent parallel and comparison. That is not so much a matter of wide reading or scholarship, although we must make ourselves very familiar with the plays of Fletcher, and with the plays, as well as the criticism, of Dryden: it is a matter of the exercise of the critical imagination. There are critics who are definitely wrong-headed. Thomas Rymer was a man of considerable learning, and not destitute of taste, when he left his taste to look after itself; but a false theory of what the drama should be, of what he *ought* to like, came very near to paralysing that function altogether, and made him the butt of his own and subsequent times. Nevertheless, I believe that the falsity of his dramatic theory, and the absurdity of the conclusions he drew from it, have had the unfortunate effect—as the extremity of false theorising is apt to do—of sometimes confirming people in their own false opinions merely because they assured themselves too confidently that whatever Rymer did not believe must be right.

As soon as we enter the eighteenth century we feel a change in the atmosphere of criticism; and in reading the criticism itself we are aware that Shakespeare is beginning to be more read than seen upon the stage. Addison calls attention to a point of detail (the crowing of the cock in *Hamlet*) which has probably, we feel, struck him rather in the reading than at a performance; the attention of the eighteenth-century critic in England is rather on the poetry than on the drama. The observations of Pope are of value and interest, because they are by Pope. If other eighteenth-century critics are to be read, it is not so much for their individual contributions, but as a reminder that there was no period in which Shakespeare fell into neglect. There is

indeed some development. Shakespeare begins to be written about in greater detail and at greater length, and apart from any more general discussion of the drama; he is, in the eighteenth century, gradually *detached* from his environment, from the other dramatists, and from a time which had become unfamiliar. And it may be mentioned, though this is outside my province, that during the eighteenth century the standard of scholarship and editorship was rising. But the major part of eighteenth-century criticism down to Johnson, and almost all the French criticism of Shakespeare during this period, strike me as unprofitable reading unless we enlarge our interests. The criticism of Shakespeare at any epoch is a most useful means of inducting us into the way in which people of that time enjoyed their contemporary poetry; and the approval which they express of Shakespeare indicates that he possessed some of the qualities that they cultivated in their own verse, and perhaps other qualities that they would have liked to find there. A study of the opinions of Voltaire, La Harpe and Diderot about Shakespeare may help to increase our appreciation of Racine; it is quite certain that we can never make head or tail of these opinions unless we do enjoy Corneille and Racine. And I do not mean merely a polite acquaintance with their plays, or a fluent ability to declaim their verse; I mean the immediate delight in their poetry. That is an experience which may arrive late in life, or oftener not at all; if it comes—I am speaking, of course, of Anglo-Saxon experience only—it is an illumination. And it is far from corrupting our pleasure in Shakespeare, or reducing our admiration. Poetry does not do these things to other poetry: the beauty of one kind only enhances the lustre of another.

To pass from Dryden to Johnson is to make the journey from one oasis to another. After the critical essays of Dryden, the Preface to Shakespeare by Samuel Johnson is the next of the great pieces of criticism to read. One would willingly resign the honour of an Abbey burial for the greater honour of words like the following, from a man of the greatness of their author:

The poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision, may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of

established fame and prescriptive veneration. He has long outlived his century, the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost; and every topic of merriment, or motive of sorrow, which the modes of artificial life afforded him, now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favour and competition are at an end; the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished; his works support no opinion with arguments, nor supply any faction with invectives; they can neither indulge vanity, nor gratify malignity; but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are therefore praised only as pleasure is obtained; yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, they have passed through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation to another, have received new honours at every transmission.

What a valedictory and obituary for any man to receive! My point is that if you assume that the classical criticism of England was grudging in its praise of Shakespeare, I say that no poet can ask more of posterity than to be greatly honoured by the great; and Johnson's words about Shakespeare are great honour.

Johnson refutes those critics—and only Johnson could do it—who had thought that Shakespeare violated propriety, here and there, with his observation that Shakespeare's 'scenes are occupied only by men, who act and think as the reader thinks that he himself should have spoken or acted on the same occasion'. But a little further Johnson makes another most remarkable (but not sufficiently remarked) observation, to which several subsequent editors and publishers, even to our own time, seem to have paid not sufficient deference:

The players, who in their edition divided our author's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have defined the three kinds by any very exact or definite ideas.

To those who would divide periods, and segregate men, neatly into classical and romantic groups, I commend the study of this sentence, and of what Johnson says afterwards about the relation of the tragic to the comic. This Preface to Shakespeare was published in 1765, and Voltaire, still writing ten years and

more after this event, was maintaining an opposite point of view. Johnson saw deeper than Voltaire, in this as in most matters. Johnson perceived, though not explicitly, that the distinctions of tragic and comic are superficial—for us; though he did not know how important they were for the Greeks; for he did not know that they sprang from a difference in ritual. As a poet—and he was a fine poet—Johnson is at the end of a tether. But as a critic—and he was greater as critic than as poet—Johnson has a place comparable to that of Cowley as poet: in that we cannot say whether to classify him as the last of one kind or the first of another. There is one sentence which we may boggle over. Johnson says:

In tragedy he (*i.e.* Shakespeare) often writes, with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but, in his comic scenes, he seems to produce, without labour, what no labour can improve.

This is an opinion which we cannot lightly dismiss. Johnson is quite aware that the alternation of 'tragic' and 'comic' is something more than an alternation; he perceives that something different and new is produced. 'The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion'. '*Through all these denominations of the drama Shakespeare's mode of composition is the same.*' But why should Johnson have thought that Shakespeare's comic parts were spontaneous, and that his tragic parts were laboured? Here, it seems to me, Johnson, by his simple integrity, in being wrong has happened upon some truth much deeper than he knew. For to those who have experienced the full horror of life, tragedy is still inadequate. Sophocles felt more of it than he could express, when he wrote *Œdipus the King*; Shakespeare, when he wrote *Hamlet*; and Shakespeare had the advantage of being able to employ his grave-diggers. In the end, horror and laughter may be one—only when horror and laughter have become as horrible and laughable as they can be; and—whatever the conscious intention of the authors—you may laugh or shudder over *Œdipus* or *Hamlet* or *King Lear*—or both at once: then only do you perceive that the aim of the comic and the tragic dramatist is the same:

they are equally serious. So do the meanings of words change, as we inspect them, that we may even come to see Molière in some lights as a more serious dramatist than Corneille or Racine; Wycherley as equally serious (in this sense) with Marlowe. All this is suggested to me by the words of Samuel Johnson which I have quoted. What Plato perceived has not been noticed by subsequent dramatic critics; the dramatic poet uses the conventions of tragic and comic poetry, so far as these are the conventions of his day; there is potential comedy in Sophocles and potential tragedy in Aristophanes, and otherwise they would not be such good tragedians or comedians as they are. It might be added that when you have comedy and tragedy united in the wrong way, or separated in the wrong way, you get sentiment or amusement. The distinction between the tragic and the comic is an account of the way in which we try to live; when we get below it, as in *King Lear*, we have an account of the way in which we do live.

The violent change between one period and another is both progress and retrogression. I have quoted only a few sentences from Johnson's Preface to Shakespeare; but I think they represent the view of a mature, if limited, personality. The next phase of English criticism of Shakespeare is prefaced from Germany. I must add, however, that the influence of German criticism upon English at this point can easily be exaggerated. It is in no wise to belittle the value of this criticism, if we affirm that there was rather a similarity of outlook, and a natural sympathy between the German and the English mind, in approaching Shakespeare, which we do not find with the French critics. It would be rash to assert that the German mind is better qualified to appreciate Shakespeare than is the French; but one less comprehensive generalisation I believe can be made. For the French mind, the approach to Shakespeare has normally been by way of a comparison to Corneille and Racine, if not to Molière. Now for the Frenchman the plays of his classical age are primarily, to this day, plays to be acted; and his memories of them are of the theatre at least as much as of the library. For the Englishman of the nineteenth century the plays of Shake-



speare have been dramatic poems to be read, rather than plays to be seen; and for most of us to-day the great majority of the plays are solely literary acquaintances. Furthermore, the French have always had this background of their own great dramatic achievement. But the Germans have never had this background of native authority in the drama; their acquaintance with Shakespeare was formed in the study; and until the reputation of Goethe was firmly established throughout Europe they had no native dramatic author with whom to compare him. For these reasons alone, without any rash generalisations about the Gallic and the Teutonic mind, we should expect the German attitude to be more sympathetic.

But the kind of criticism which arises rather from reading than from attendance at the theatre arose in England spontaneously. The first striking example of this sort of criticism, a remarkable piece of writing which deserves meditation, and which commands our respect whether we agree with its conclusions or not, is Morgann's *Essay On the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* (1777). For the case which Morgann attempts to make out, I refer the reader to Morgann himself. My point is that Morgann's essay is the first conspicuous member of a long line of criticism dealing with the characters of the personages in the plays, considering not only their actions within the play itself, but inferring from their behaviour on the stage what their general character is, that is to say, how they would behave in other circumstances. This is a perfectly legitimate form of criticism, though liable to abuses; at its best, it can add very much to our enjoyment of the moments of the characters' life which are given in the scene, if we feel this richness of reality in them; and at its worst, it becomes an irrelevance and distracts us from our enjoyment of the play.

The first of the great German critics, Lessing, tended to make of Shakespeare almost a national issue, for he it was who affirmed that English literature and in particular Shakespeare, was more congenial than French literature and drama to the German taste. The German critics in general insist upon the naturalness and fidelity to reality of Shakespeare's plays. Herder, a critic

of considerable understanding, begins to appreciate the existence of something like a poetic pattern, in calling attention to the fitness between the passions of the personages and the scenery in which these passions are enacted. But what interests me in this place is not a detailed valuation of the opinions of the German critics of this period—not even the opinions of the Schlegels and Goethe—but a consideration of the general tendency of their opinions. Neglecting the circumstances in which the plays were written—and indeed the historical information was not available—and paying little attention to their dramatic merits, the Germans concentrated their attention chiefly upon the philosophical significance of character. They penetrate to a deeper level than that of the simple moral values attributed to great literature by earlier times, and foreshadow the ‘criticism of life’ definition by Arnold. Furthermore, it is not until this period that an element of ‘mystery’ is recognised in Shakespeare. That is one of the gifts of the Romantic Movement to Shakespeare criticism, and one for which, with all its excesses, we have reason to be grateful. It is hardly too much to say that the German critics and Coleridge, by their criticism of Shakespeare, radically altered the reflective attitude of criticism towards poetry.

The writings of Coleridge upon Shakespeare must be read entire; for it is impossible to understand Shakespeare criticism to this day, without a familiar acquaintance with Coleridge’s lectures and notes. Coleridge is an authority of the kind whose influence extends equally towards good and bad. It would be unjust to father upon him, without further ceremony, the psycho-analytic school of Shakespeare criticism; the study of individual characters which was begun by Morgann, to the neglect of the pattern and meaning of the whole play, was bound to lead to some such terminus, and we do not blame Morgann for that. But when Coleridge released the truth that Shakespeare already in *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* gave proof of a ‘most profound, energetic and philosophic mind’ he was perfectly right, if we use these adjectives rightly, but he supplied a dangerous stimulant to the more adventurous.

'Philosophic' is of course not the right word, but it cannot simply be erased: you must find another word to put in its place, and the word has not yet been found. The sense of the profundity of Shakespeare's 'thought', or of his thinking-in-images, has so oppressed some critics that they have been forced to explain themselves by unintelligibles.

I have not spoken of Hazlitt, Lamb and De Quincey; that is because I wished to isolate Coleridge as perhaps the greatest single figure in Shakespeare criticism down to the present day. In a conspectus like the present, only the most salient points can be more than mentioned; and Hazlitt, Lamb and De Quincey, for my present purposes, do but make a constellation about the primary star of Coleridge. Their work is chiefly important as reinforcing the influence of Coleridge; though De Quincey's *Knocking on the Gate in Macbeth* is perhaps the best known single piece of criticism of Shakespeare that has been written. But for the student of Shakespeare criticism, the writing of all of these men is among those documents that are to be read, and not merely read about.

## II. FROM COLERIDGE TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY

J. ISAACS

THE eighteenth century was the age of Shakespeare idolatry, with Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee, and Daniel Webb's typical remark in 1762: 'the most extraordinary genius, that our country, or, perhaps, any other has produced'. The later history of Shakespeare criticism is a reflection of the history of human movements of thought, or of the particular pattern of thought in each country on which he has impinged. The growth of romanticism swept Shakespeare forward as an unwitting leader in the campaign against Cartesian mechanism. In Germany, Russia and France he became part of the movement. Herder and Goethe in Germany, Pushkin and Bielinski in Russia, Stendhal and Hugo in France, all bear critical testimony to the progress of the romantic movement under his banner. In Germany and Russia the period of the romantic movement is the 'Hamlet-period', in which the character of the Shakespearian figure becomes a mirror and symbol of the national growing-pains. Friedrich Gundolf's *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist* (1911) is a penetrating history of the German mind and civilisation in terms of its awareness and assimilation of Shakespeare. The pre-romantic legacy, with Maurice Morgann, William Richardson and Thomas Whately, was an overwhelming belief in Shakespeare's power as a creator of living and plausible characters. The romantic legacy, with Coleridge, Hazlitt and Schlegel, was an insistence on Shakespeare as a creative and original genius whose contribution was to be measured and traced. Kantian, Schellingian and other currents induced a philosophical tendency towards unity of conception and interpretation. Wordsworth, as early as his brilliant *Essay Supplementary to the Preface of 1817*, acknowledged, to Coleridge's annoyance, the German superiority in recognising that 'the judgment of Shakespeare in the selection of his materials, and in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end, is not less

admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human nature'.

Once the chronology of the plays had been established in its main outlines, the task of tracing Shakespeare's growth to maturity, his summits of achievement, and in general the pattern of his creative career, was facilitated. The task was attempted simultaneously in England and Germany, but reached special heights under the impulse of the unifying philosophical approach. In England, William Spalding, Charles Knight and Henry Hallam, and in Germany Hermann Ulrici and G. G. Gervinus, were the chief builders of a Shakespeare whose pattern of growth could be traced in well-marked successive periods. In David Masson in 1865 we get the first glimpses of the sentimental 'final mood of reconciliation' theory. Dowden's *Shakspere: His Mind and Art* (1875) is the first book in English to give anything like a unified and rounded picture of the whole achievement of the dramatist. Dowden and Furnivall went all out on the 'four period' doctrine, and though their sentimentality and their belief in Shakespeare's doctrine of female sweetness and purity soon earned the label of gush from more sober critics, it is this sentimental picture which still too largely holds the field in orthodox circles. In 1864 Rümelin's *Shakspere Studies by a Realist* incurred the powerful scorn of the reinforced sentimentalists, but was the forerunner of a serious change in critical orientation. Hand in hand with sentiment concerning Shakespeare's female characters, but in keeping with the scientific movement of the later century, went hard-headed investigation into the statistics of Shakespeare's versification, and exact measuring of his artistic processes. The Shakespeare idolatry of the eighteenth century was a pleading for the recognition of his creative genius: the idolatry of the nineteenth century was an employment of his genius as an excuse for the investigation of the important red herring of the moment, whether character study, creative unity, periodising, verse processes, chronology, ethics, dramatic technique, or, at opposite poles of homage, critical bibliography and the poet's personality. After the romantic period, in which criticism was frequently produced

by poets, the study of Shakespeare's poetry with any degree of critical intensity was rare. Ten years after Dowden's sentiment came R. G. Moulton's science in *Shakespeare as a dramatic artist. A popular illustration of scientific criticism* (1885), a direction followed later by G. P. Baker and, with a difference, by Quiller-Couch.

One of the chief critical occupations of the nineteenth century, and in part of the twentieth century, was the building up of a picture of Shakespeare's personality. In their different ways Dowden, Brandes, Frank Harris, and even James Joyce in the brilliant debate in *Ulysses*, have attempted the task. The mere attempt implies the possession of a predisposing conception that tends to make Shakespeare an amateur philosopher's plaything. The most aggressive title in this field, though kindly meant, is C. H. Herford's *The normality of Shakespeare, illustrated in his treatment of love and marriage* (1920). The chief monument of this tendency lies in A. C. Bradley's magnificent, influential and dangerously side-tracking studies, written, as it were, in the margin of Hegel.

I take it that the true objects of Shakespeare criticism are (a) to give a picture of the author by tracing his treatment of material so far as it is conscious, or eliciting his unconscious processes without imposing an autobiography of the critic upon the victim of his inquiries; (b) to give the pattern of the man and dissect for admiration the beauties he produces, the complexity and explosive force of the poetry, and the deploying and juxtaposition of the characters. From this point of view the examination of the growth of character-study is instructive. In the eighteenth century Morgann, in proving that Falstaff was no coward, believed in Shakespeare's characters 'rather as historic than dramatic beings'. Coleridge, among other views, held that Shakespeare created a character 'by conceiving any one intellectual or moral faculty in morbid excess and then placing himself, thus mutilated and diseased, under given circumstances'. Such a doctrine was a transition from the eighteenth century method to the romantic conception of the creative and conscious genius. Furnivall's platonic affairs with Shakespeare's heroines indicate a characteristic divorce of head and heart. Bradley took *The Rejection of Falstaff* into philosophical regions. With the

waning of philosophical idealism, the new realism, though not always the new science, treated matters differently. The new science was seen in Dr Ernest Jones's *The Oedipus-complex as an explanation of Hamlet's mystery* (1910), reissued in the more receptive post-war year of 1922. This is the last flicker of the Richardsonian method, but employs all the subtleties of the new Freudian technique of psycho-analysis. Apart from the initial fallacy, which is Morgann's fallacy, the justification of the method lies in its attempt to add to our information concerning Shakespeare's choice of material and his adventures among motives. The psycho-analytical technique as applied to Coleridge by J. L. Lowes in *The Road to Xenadu* is valuable because the evidence is available, i.e. the patient gives his replies, but we know nothing about Shakespeare except what we can learn from his behaviour; but according to this theory his plays *are* his behaviour, and therefore a valuable set of clues to his interests, passions, tensions, thoughts, complexes of association, and even the objects of his affection or hate. The new realism turned to less subtle and less debatable sources for dealing with character. G. A. Bieber, under the influence of Schucking, discussed the 'melancholy type', as it pervaded Elizabethan society, for light on Hamlet, and Lily B. Campbell explored the physiological psychology of the age in order to establish Shakespeare's automatic equipment for dealing with character. E. E. Stoll, the most powerful and illuminating of the American school of realists, and L. L. Schucking, the penetrating author of *Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays*, have both turned to the evidence of the plays and above all of contemporary dramatic conventions for their proofs. They have established the fact that soliloquies are to be taken at face value, that statements made by one character about another are to be believed, that Elizabethan ghosts were real to the audience, and with a score of similar positions have overturned the whole system of romantic character study. <sup>1</sup>

The new realism has tried to isolate and display, not the Romantic Shakespeare, nor the Victorian Shakespeare, but the Elizabethan Shakespeare. The present tendency of Shakespeare criticism is to face the author squarely rather than dodge him by excursions into philosophy, history or ethics. One of the

great pioneers of this approach, and one of the most balanced of worshippers, was Sir W. Raleigh, who in his 1907 study boldly spoke of the brothel scene in *Pericles* 'which no pen but his could have written', and speaking of *Measure for Measure* as Shakespeare's nearest approach to the direct presentation of a moral problem, concluded that there was no single character through whose eyes we can see the question and situation as Shakespeare saw them. The new realism also owes much to the diverse shock-tactics of T. S. Eliot, and of G. Bernard Shaw, once a member of Furnivall's New Shakspeare Society. Valuable work is being done by H. B. Charlton in viewing Shakespeare's early plays in the light of Renaissance critical conceptions of drama and the European picture of romance in Elizabethan times. A pertinent approach, and one likely to endure by its relevance, is the transference of investigation from the study to the theatrical laboratory by H. Granville-Barker.

The study of Shakespeare's poetry is at last coming into its own, and firm materials for criticism, though only materials as yet, are being assembled by such students of imagery as Edmund Blunden, George Rylands, Elizabeth Holmes and Caroline Spurgeon. It is a strange comment on the history of Shakespeare criticism that during 300 years no serious study, and, apart from Coleridge's brilliant asides, no serious attempt even at a study of Shakespeare's poetical processes has been made. That poetry cannot be isolated from the history of the other arts has long been a commonplace on the Continent, and one important line of inquiry has been hinted at. Some decades ago Heinrich Wölfflin revolutionised European art history by a reasoned distinction between Renaissance and Baroque art. The first person to apply this distinction to the study of Shakespeare was the dean of German literary history, Oskar Walzel, in *Shakespeares dramatische Baukunst*, fittingly enough in the *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch* of the Tercentenary year 1916.

Ralli's chronological summary of Shakespeare criticism gives a terrifying notion of the extent of the material; the present short sketch endeavours in summary form to indicate the main tendencies and to relate them to larger movements of mind in the period covered.



# SHAKESPEARIAN SCHOLARSHIP

BY

J. ISAACS

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SHAKESPEARE scholarship is of vast extent and complexity. It is concerned in its major operations with (*a*) the establishment of the text, (*b*) its transmission, (*c*) its elucidation, (*d*) the canon, (*e*) chronology, (*f*) the study of sources, (*g*) the biography of the author, (*h*) his manipulation of material, (*i*) his mental processes, (*j*) his versification, (*k*) his reading, (*l*) his poetical imagery, (*m*) his relation to the literary movements of his time, (*n*) his relation to individual contemporaries, (*o*) his reputation, (*p*) his influence at home and abroad, (*q*) the historical and political background, (*r*) the social background, (*s*) the intellectual background, scientific and philosophical, (*t*) the linguistic background, (*u*) palaeography, (*v*) iconography, (*w*) the theatrical background, (*x*) the specific conditions of performance, (*y*) the author's dramatic technique, and (*z*) the pattern of his growth. The *select* bibliography by Ebisch and Schücking contains over 4000 items, and the present outline is a first attempt to cover the whole field of scholarship from Langbaine to the twentieth century.

The seventeenth century did little more than hint. Dryden in *An Essay of Dramatick Poesie* was aware of the existence of problems of language, versification, learning, sources, and biography, but the time was not yet ripe for action. Fuller and Aubrey made jottings for the life of Shakespeare. The much maligned Rymer started two hares, the discussion of Shakespeare's dramatic method by comparison with a specific source,

and the publication, in his *Fœdera*, of a contemporary document containing Shakespeare's name. Gerard Langbaine in 1688 and 1691 valuably conducted the first systematic search for the sources of the plays.

The eighteenth century is our creditor for a hundred things in method and achievement. From Rowe to Malone there is an unbroken continuity of text, good, bad, and indifferent. Rowe in 1709 first made Shakespeare accessible in octavo, he used the 1685 folio, modernised it into readability, paid minimum homage to quarto collation, although he possessed a few quartos and a Second Folio, compiled lists of *Dramatis Personae*, completed the division into acts and scenes, marked exits and entrances, in certain plays marked the location of scenes, and gave the first formal life of the author, incorporating traditions and anecdotes. Pope in 1725 printed from Rowe's text, collated more quartos, made personal and arbitrary corrections and rejections, indicated more completely the location of scenes, and extended scene division to the French method of a new scene for each new character. In the 1728 edition he printed a list of 29 quartos he used or knew of. According to Malone, the unknown editor of the Second Folio and Pope were the two great corrupters of Shakespeare's text. Theobald, maligned, despised, insulted and pillaged for over a century, was rehabilitated by Lounsbury, Churton Collins and R. F. Jones. His *Shakespeare Restored*, 1726, demolished Pope's edition and formed a landmark in commentary. His edition of 1733 makes him the great pioneer of serious Shakespeare scholarship. He too used his predecessor's text, but following Bentley's methods, treated Shakespeare as a corrupt classical text to be restored by the aid of all available knowledge. He possessed a large collection of quartos, was the first editor with an extensive and serious knowledge of Elizabethan and earlier literature, and had sufficient languages to read many of the original sources. He studied Shakespeare minutely, formulated his metrical and grammatical practice, and illustrated and corrected the text from the known procedure of the author himself. He was the first to point to Shakespeare's use of North's *Plutarch*, to draw attention to an

existing translation of the *Menæchi* of Plautus, and to trace Shakespeare's reading and use of Holinshed. He turned to the earliest texts and restored readings without need of conjecture. His certain conjecture and method may be seen at its best in the note on the *weyward* sisters in *Macbeth*: his brilliant conjectural emendation, however much assailed, in 'a' babbled of green fields': his making sense of nonsense in the prologue to *Troilus and Cressida*. He made pioneer advances, without consolidating them into treatises, in the study of authorship, chronology and sources. He was the first to allude to *The True Chronicle History of King Lear*, the first to use *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, and had heard of Lodge's *Rosalynde*. Professor Karl Young pays him the tribute that 'in a surprising number of specific instances he furnished fresh information and suggestions that ought to have guided his successors to far greater industry, and to far less disparagement of their guide'. Unquestionably Theobald is the first giant of Shakespeare scholarship.

Accurate scholarship lagged for some while. One of the worst editions was that of Sir Thomas Hanmer, 1713-4, based on Theobald's text, which went so far as to omit a scene of *Henry V* 'improper enough as it is all in French, and not intelligible to an English audience', and emended Casio 'a fellow almost damn'd in a faire Wife' to 'damn'd in a fair phyzz'. Warburton in 1747 insulted Theobald, but used his text and much of his material, while introducing some of the wildest emendations in our history. He was seriously taken to task by Thomas Edwards in his *Supplement*, 1746, and in his later *Canons of Criticism*. The contribution of Dr Johnson has been seriously exaggerated by misinformed piety. Perspective has been distorted by the attribution to him of many of Theobald's discoveries and much of Theobald's pioneer method. His *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth* in 1745 contained proposals for an edition. His prospectus of 1756 is an admirable summary of principles and methods proposed before him, and followed by later editors, but his edition of 1765 based on Warburton's text was avowedly undertaken for money, and as Hawkins says in his *Life* 'neither in the first place did he set himself to collect early editions of

his author, old plays, translations of histories, and of the classics, and other materials necessary for his purpose, nor could he be prevailed on to enter into that course of reading, without which it seemed impossible to come at the sense of his author'. He did not even make adequate use of Charlotte Lennox's *Shakespeare Illustrated* (1753-4), the first published collection of Shakespearian source material for some twenty-two plays, to which he himself had contributed a dedication. The faults of his edition are atoned for by his magnificent critical preface and comments on individual plays, by his pioneer recognition that only the first of the folios has textual authority, and by the later additions of Steevens, the second of the eighteenth century giants.

With Steevens and Capell began a new era, the quarto era. In 1766 George Steevens reprinted twenty of the quartos from Garrick's collection in four volumes. The stage directions are not tampered with, nor added to, there are no localisations, no added act or scene divisions, and the title-pages are reasonably exact. He included *King Lear* and the *Sonnets*, and the longest list of old editions hitherto compiled, including 'nine seen by nobody he knows'. Edward Capell, who had been collecting quartos since 1744, and had spent twelve years in preparation, sent the first sheets of his edition to press in 1760, and began publication in 1768. This edition is a dividing line in textual history, and Capell is one of the neglected major scholars of the century, partly because of the strangeness of his style, but mainly because, rather than print an ugly page, the results of his laborious and minutely accurate collation of quartos remained unpublished (except for a section issued in 1774), until 1783 (two years after his death) in the three massive quartos of his *Notes and Various Readings* and *The School of Shakespeare*. The editor's dedication of this work accused Steevens of systematic plagiarism of Capell's 1768 edition. Steevens certainly used Capell, but his powers were such that he had no need to. All editors and commentators of this period were quick to take hints, and pursue suggested inquiries. Steevens was one of the most learned in Elizabethan matters, an alert, shrewd and skittish scholar, enlivening his later editions with obscene annotations fathered facetiously on

two respectable clergymen who had incurred his enmity. He took over Dr Johnson's edition, supplied the missing scholarship and industry, and in 1773 issued a ten-volume edition, containing richer illustrative material from contemporary literary sources than had previously been assembled, which in its 1778 revision is one of the landmarks of Shakespearian scholarship. From the 1760's onward scholarship moved with lightning pace. An example will show most clearly the interlocking of scholars and new fact. In 1766 Thomas Tyrwhitt in an anonymous pamphlet of textual conjecture, *Observations and Conjectures upon some passages of Shakespeare*, was the first to mention Meres's *Palladis Tamia*. In 1767 Richard Farmer used Meres incidentally in his rich mine of background information, the *Essay on the learning of Shakespeare*. In 1768 Capell used him for purposes of dating, and also quoted an entry in the Stationers' Register. In 1778 Steevens published the first extensive transcript of relevant Shakespeare entries from the Stationers' Register 'through the kindness of Mr Longman of Pater-noster Row, who readily furnished me with the three earliest volumes', and this immediately precedes Malone's epoch-making *Attempt to ascertain the order in which the plays attributed to Shakespeare were written*. But meanwhile Capell had been at work on the same problem and with the same materials, and in the neglected storehouse of his *Notes and Various Readings* (vol. II, p. 183), printed during 1779 and 1780 but held up until 1783, is found a discussion of the order and time of writing, based on internal evidence, Meres, and an 'Extract from the Books of the Stationers' Company, communicated by Mr S. Draper, Partner with the Tonsons' and on p. 185 a chronological table of the plays. As Mr Draper seems to give up publishing about 1765, we have a pretty picture of parallel efforts in an age of scholarly rivalry and bad feeling. The extent to which material was becoming available can be measured by examining the vast prolegomena to Steevens's 1778 edition, with its extract from *The Gull's Hornbook*, the drawing of the exterior of the Globe, the list of ancient translations from classic authors (partly compiled by Richard Farmer, who had contributed a substantial appendix to the 1773 edition),

the reprints of prefaces to earlier editions, the facsimiles of Shakespeare's Will and signature, the notes to Langbaine by Oldys, the extracts from the Stationers' Register, the list of ancient editions (amplifying Pope's, Theobald's, Warburton's, Capell's and Steevens's earlier lists of quartos), extracts from Shakespeare criticism, and other valuable matter.

At the beginning of his *Attempt* in 1778 Malone sums up the position of scholarship. 'All the ancient copies of his plays, hitherto discovered, have been collated with the most scrupulous accuracy. The meanest books have been carefully examined, only because they were of the age in which he lived, and might happily throw a light on some forgotten custom, or obsolete phraseology: and, the object being still kept in view, the toil of wading through *all such reading as was never read*, has been cheerfully endured, because no labour was thought too great, that might enable us to add one new laurel to the father of our drama. Almost every circumstance that tradition, or history has preserved relative to him or his works, has been investigated, and laid before the public.' Malone was to add almost as much again, and to show that by comparison the study of Shakespeare was, as it is again to-day, an almost untouched field. His industry is incalculable. Capell is said to have transcribed the whole of Shakespeare ten times. Malone's annotations in any book from his library are profuse and almost always relevant (*e.g.* his copy of Capell in ten volumes in the British Museum, re-collated throughout, with copious insults, in 1781). In 1780 he published a supplementary two volumes to Steevens, containing the *Poems*, the doubtful plays from the 1664 Folio, a first sketch of his pioneer *Historical account of the rise and progress of the English stage*, and numerous annotations. In 1790 he issued his edition in ten volumes, with revisions of his chronology and stage-history, and vastly increased illustrative material; and he and Steevens are the chief builders, with Reed and the youngest Boswell, of variorum editions. Johnson--Steevens--Reed in twenty-one volumes, 1803, is the First Variorum; Johnson--Steevens--Reed in twenty-one volumes, 1813, is the Second Variorum; and Malone--Boswell in twenty-one volumes, 1821,

is the Third Variorum, and in these are summarised and incorporated the body of eighteenth-century scholarship.

Apart from this almost apostolic succession of editions, with their concomitants of emendation and illustrative material, the eighteenth century opened up fields of research in almost every direction known to later scholarship. As early as 1729, J. Roberts in a pseudonymous *Answer to Mr Pope's Preface to Shakespeare* published a sketch of the old actors, and discussed, in four categories, the 'copy' for the Folio. In 1779 Steevens supervised the publication of *Six Old Plays* used by Shakespeare. In 1768 Richard Warner in *A letter to Mr Garrick* gave a specimen of a remarkable proposed glossary illustrated from vast reading in literature contemporary with Shakespeare. His note on 'the word occupy' in *II Henry IV* is an admirable example. In 1790 the Rev. Samuel Ayscough, F.S.A., compiled the first extensive *Index* or concordance, still in use on the reference shelves of the British Museum. The study of Shakespeare's verse started with Theobald, received valuable discussion in Capell's posthumous *Principles and Construction of Shakespeare's Verse*, and as early as 1756, in the sixth edition of T. Edwards's *Canons of Criticism*, Richard Roderick noted the verse peculiarities of *Henry VIII* which were to loom so large in the 'verse-test' movement. Shakespeare's grammar was investigated by Theobald, and classified in summary rules by John Upton in 1746. The punctuation of Shakespeare was worked out on historical lines by George Chalmers in 1797 in his *Apology for the believers in the Shakespeare Papers*. The biography was explored by William Oldys in the missing notes left unarranged at his death in 1781, and Malone made the extensive additions which were codified by Alexander Chalmers in 1809 in time for the intensive onslaught of the nineteenth century. Capell in 1768 had suggested the necessity of 'a brief history of our Drama, from its origin down to the Poet's death: even the stage he appear'd upon, its form, dressings, actors should be enquir'd into, as every one of these circumstances had some considerable effect upon what he compos'd for it', and Percy, Malone and Chalmers built this up, with the aid of those like Dodsley, Hawkins and Reed, who

were publishing remains and documents of older drama, and of Warton who was clarifying the perspective of English poetry. It is to Steevens and Malone that we first owe the Henslowe papers, the Dulwich 'plots', the Revels Accounts, Sir Henry Herbert's Office Book, and the first facsimiles of Shakespeare's signatures. The study of the canon was pursued by a dozen authors from Pope and Theobald to Malone, who printed the Apocrypha in 1780. Comparative studies of Shakespeare's usage with that of other dramatists owe much to Theobald, Warner, Steevens, Capell and Malone, and even the vagaries of the historical and topical allusion school can be paralleled in James Plumptre's *Observations on Hamlet... being an attempt to prove that he designed it as indirect censure on Mary Queen of Scots* (1796). Even the habit of public lecturing on Shakespeare was a product of the eighteenth century, and the first ascertainable lecture was given by Charles Macklin, who, in the *Public Advertiser* for November 21st, 1751, proposed to lecture, beginning the next day, 'upon each of Shakespear's Plays, to consider the Original Stories from whence they are taken, the Artificial or Inartificial Use, according to the Laws of the Drama, that Shakespear has made of them. His Fable, Moral, Character, Passions, Manners, will likewise be criticised, and how his capital Characters have been acted heretofore, are acted, and ought to be acted... The First Lecture will be on HAMLET'. Twenty years later William Kenrick, the critic of Dr Johnson's 'ignorance or inattention', offered a course beginning with *Henry the Fourth*. One of the most important and neglected anticipations of the latest scholarship was an offshoot of the psychological study of Shakespeare, and is to be found in Walter Whiter's *Specimen of a Commentary on Shakespeare... on a new principle of criticism derived from Mr Locke's Doctrine of the Association of Ideas*, 1794. Whiter took Locke's statement, 'Ideas, that in themselves are not at all of kin, come to be so united in some men's minds, that it is very hard to separate them; they always *keep in company*, and the one no sooner at any time comes into the understanding, but its *associate* appears with it; and if they are more than two which are thus united, the *whole gang* always inseparable shew themselves together', and 137



years before Dr Caroline Spurgeon's study of *Iterative Imagery* noted the recurrent association of candy and fawning dogs.

In the variorum editions from 1803 to 1821 the nineteenth century found a kind of Chinese wall preventing exploration of earlier scholars. After Coleridge's new and rounded picture of Shakespeare there was less pioneer stone-breaking and road-making, and more consolidation of fields won. In 1790 Malone had said, 'When our poet's entire library shall have been discovered, and the fables of all his plays traced to their original source, when every temporary allusion shall have been pointed out, and every obscurity elucidated, then, and not till then, let the accumulation of notes be complained of. I scarcely remember ever to have looked into a book of the age of Queen Elizabeth, in which I did not find somewhat that tended to throw a light on these plays'. A floodlight was thrown by Francis Douce's remarkable *Illustrations of Shakespeare* in two volumes, 1807 (e.g. 'Dagonet in Arthur's Show') and the same year saw the first type-facsimile of the First Folio, said to be supervised by Douce. The eighteenth century had been an age of individuals, and usually well-to-do individuals. The nineteenth century was to see the triumph of corporate and organised research. In 1840 the first Shakespeare Society was formed by J. P. Collier with the aid of a council including G. L. Craik, A. Dyce, J. O. Halliwell (aged twenty), Charles Knight and Thomas Wright. The chief contributors to its papers were J. P. Collier, Peter Cunningham, J. O. Halliwell and J. N. Halpin. Its list of publications is huge and of the first importance, including Peter Cunningham's *Revels Documents*, 1812; Dyce's edition of *Sir Thomas More*, 1844; J. P. Collier's *Henslowe's Diary*, 1815; and J. P. Collier's *Extracts from the Registers of the Stationers' Company*, 1818, as well as a host of plays, mediaeval and Elizabethan, and much background matter. Individual editions of the works continued to be produced by S. W. Singer and J. P. Collier. J. O. Halliwell's much neglected Folio Edition is still valuable for its rich archaeological illustrations. Delius produced a valuable selective edition, and Dyce's second edition was adorned with an excellent glossary, scrupulously acknowledging previous achievement, and on such words

as 'sack' making important additions. The great landmark of the mid-century is the *Cambridge Shakespeare* of Clark, Glover and Wright in 1863-6, which in the 1891-3 revision is almost the standard text of to-day. Its rigorous system of collation was facilitated by Capell's superb bequest of quartos to Trinity College. Furness's New Variorum Edition from 1871 provided a new labyrinth of commentary and illustration. Furnivall's important introduction of 1877 prefaced a one-volume edition of *Delius*, and later editions of value include Appleton Morgan's *Bankside Shakespeare* from 1886, issued by the New York Shakespeare Society, and printing quartos and Folio side by side, Sir Israel Gollancz's popular *Temple Shakespeare* (1894-1922), the co-operative *Arden Shakespeare* from 1899 to 1924 under the general editorship of W. J. Craig and R. H. Case, selected plays edited by G. S. Gordon, and by H. J. C. Grierson, and from America the *Tudor Shakespeare* by W. A. Neilson and A. H. Thorndike, and the co-operative *Yale Shakespeare* by W. L. Cross and Tucker Brooke.

The main divisions of nineteenth-century scholarship are indicated by Furnivall in his enthusiastic preface to the *Leopold Shakespeare*, 1877, 'the great defect of the English school of Shakspercans is their neglect to study Shakspere as a whole. . . . This subject of the growth, the oneness of Shakspere, the links between his successive plays, the light thrown on each by comparison with its neighbour, the distinctive characteristics of each Period and its contrast with the others, the treatment of the same or like incidents etc. in the different Periods of Shakspere's life—this subject, in all its branches, is the special business of the present, the second school of Victorian students. . . as antiquarian illustration, emendation, and verbal criticism—to say nothing of forgery, or at least, publication of forg'd documents—were of the first school'. The old Shakespeare Society had come to an end in 1853 as a result of J. F. Collier's forgeries, and in 1872 F. J. Furnivall founded his New Shakspere Society which lasted until 1894. Its strength lay in the meetings and discussions recorded in its valuable series of *Transactions*. The two Victorian giants, in their different ways,

were J. O. Halliwell(-Phillipps) and F. J. Furnivall. Halliwell worked with tremendous industry, either alone or in societies, accumulating library after library of Shakespeariana, sold or given away after sucking out the Shakespearian lore. His list of publications great and small is appalling. He edited for the Shakespeare Society the 'First Sketches' of *II and III Henry VI* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. His Folio edition of the works is a mine and storehouse of information. He explored and published the Stratford records, he compiled a dictionary of Old English plays, and a glossary of obsolete English. His successive accumulations of material for Shakespeare's life culminated in the two-volume *Outlines* of 1887 containing all the documents then known. He published a list of visits of the London theatrical companies compiled from the records of seventy English towns, and even a dictionary of misprints in Elizabethan volumes, of surprising interest and value. He issued a minute photographic facsimile of the first Folio in 1876, and between 1862 and 1871 issued forty-eight volumes of lithographic facsimiles of the quartos. Probably no single worker of the nineteenth century contributed more material for the study of Shakespeare.

Furnivall was more of a team-leader and benevolent task-master. His passion for Shakespeare appears in every line that he wrote. He began as a Chaucerian expert, but a Shakespearian amateur, and the *Leopold* preface admirably explains his processes. The New Shakspeare Society is popularly identified with the furious aridity of the verse-tests and Furnivall's reputation has suffered on that account, but his intention was to use these in the service of aesthetic criticism and the establishment of the order of Shakespeare's growth as an artist. The history of the verse-tests under Furnivall is fully given, in richly personal tones, in his introduction to Gervinus's *Commentaries* written in 1874, and in his introduction to the *Leopold Shakespeare* of 1877. Nothing could be less mechanical than his position. 'Don't turn your Shakspeare into a mere arithmetic-book, and fancy you're a great critic because you add up a lot of rymes or end-stopt lines, and do a great many sums out of your poet. This is mere clerk's work; but it is needed to impress the facts

of Shakspeare's changes of metre on your mind, and to help others, as well as yourself, to data for settling the succession of the plays. Metrical tests are but one branch of the tree of criticism. . . . No one test can be trusted; all must be combined and considered, and us'd as helps for the higher aesthetic criticism'. Apart from a neglected observation by Richard Roderick published in 1758, the first use of verse-tests was made, in the interests of the study of chronology, by Malone in his famous *Attempt* (first issued in 1778, revised in 1790, and in its final form in the 1821 variorum). He used the Rhyme test, and the un-stopped or run-on line test. In 1833 William Spalding, at the age of twenty-four, published his brilliantly analytical *Letter on Shakspeare's authorship of 'The Noble Kinsmen', and on the characteristics of Shakspeare's style*. (Reprinted by Furnivall in 1876.) This is the real foundation of the whole business. But for the N.S.S. the beginning was James Spedding, whose article *Who wrote Henry VIII?* in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1850, initiated the quantitative method. Charles Bathurst's *Remarks on the differences of Shakspeare's versification in different periods of his life*, 1857, and G. L. Craik's *The English of Shakspeare*, 1856, extended the inquiry. Independently in England and Germany the Rev. F. G. Fleay and Professor Hertzberg were working out their tests. Hertzberg published before Fleay, and Furnivall at first was not aware of Fleay's activities, but when the Society started almost all its earliest meetings were devoted to Fleay, and at the first meeting Fleay produced his Metrical Table. Fleay was an erratic thinker, and Furnivall later said, 'His theories when not confirming former results should be lookt on with the utmost suspicion'. The latest forms of the tables are given in Furnivall's two prefaces, but the method was soon forgotten in England, though in Germany some valuable work has been done by Hermann Isaac (Conrad) in the *Shakspeare-Jahrbuch*, 1896, and the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, 1905.<sup>1</sup>

Furnivall also directed the issue of *Allusion Books*, reprints of background material such as William Harrison's *England*, and

<sup>1</sup> The appendix in E. K. Chambers's *William Shakspeare*, II, 397, gives important bibliography and tabular material.

above all a valuable series of quarto reprints with stimulating prefaces by himself, P. A. Daniel, Dowden and others, in which minute comparisons were made and students encouraged to work on the original materials. These quartos and Booth's almost impeccable 1864 type facsimile of the first Folio popularised and advanced first-hand textual study. The *Transactions of the N.S.S.* contain valuable documents such as Dr Forman's notes on plays he had seen, discussion of natural history imagery, of Elizabethan England and the Jews, and Richard Simpson's discussion of political and historical relations of the plays, a problem approached by G. Chalmers, H. P. Stokes and Lilian Winstanley, and more recently by G. B. Harrison in his *Elizabethan Journals*. The total activity of the New Shakspeare Society was an outcome of the scientific fever of the later half-century, and Furnivall's conclusion is instructive. 'The study of Shakspeare's work must be made . . . natural and scientific, and in the order of the maker's making, and I claim that the method I have pursued is that of the man of science, comparison, noting of differences, and identities of expression, subject, character, mood and temper of mind; and that this method and its result do bring a fresh element of certainty into the order of Shakspeare's plays, and the groups into which they fall.' That this scientific detachment was accompanied by the prevailing sentimentality towards *Shakspeare's Heroines* does not detract from its historical value.

Something must be said of the German contribution. This was ultimately the outcome of the earlier Romantic movement in which Shakespeare was used as a pawn in the intellectual fight against France, and as a philosophical ally in the anti-Cartesian campaign. Lessing, Wieland, Herder and Goethe in their different fashions brought him on to the map, but A. W. Schlegel's superb translation between 1797 and 1810 of seventeen plays, completed by Tieck later, presented Germany with a living dramatist in modern speech, and removed most of the antiquarian difficulties which had held up English appreciation. Schlegel and Coleridge simultaneously devoted attention to Shakespeare as a whole, as a creative genius. Tieck was a great

student of Elizabethan drama, as well as of the theatre. Hegel had used Shakespeare as part of his philosophical and æsthetic system, and the first serious attempts to present Shakespeare as a whole were made by Germans, Hermann Ulrici in 1839 and 1847, and G. G. Gervinus in 1849 and 1850. This is so marked that it can be truthfully said, and it was emphatically said by Furnivall in his prospectus of the New Shakspeare Society, 'It is a disgrace to England, that...no book by an Englishman exists which deals in any worthy manner with Shakspeare as a whole', and this was true until Dowden's *Shakspeare: His Mind and Art*, 1875, which acknowledged a heavy debt to the Germans. In scholarship Karl Simrock's *Die Quellen des Shakspeare in Novellen, Märchen und Sagen*, 1831, was the first collection of sources published anywhere since Charlotte Lennox's in 1753-4. (J. P. Collier followed with his *Shakspeare's Library*, 1843, W. C. Hazlitt later, and Sir I. Gollancz in 1907 with his *Shakspeare Classics*.) Delius issued his *Shakspeare Lexicon* in 1852 and his study of Elizabethan theatrical conditions in 1853. His text, first issued in 1854, was chosen by Furnivall for the *Leopold Shakspeare*. The tercentenary in 1864 produced effects in two opposite directions. Gustav Rümelin issued his 'realist' counterblast to Shakespeare idolatry and the *Deutsche Shakspeare-Gesellschaft* was founded. Its sixty-eight Yearbooks form a series of concentrated and unbroken scholarship (even in war-time) to which there is no exact parallel in any English-speaking country.<sup>1</sup>

The end of the eighteenth century saw the need of a study of the history and conditions of the theatre. Malone's 1790 investigation laid the foundations, and J. P. Collier's three-volume *History* of 1831 is one of the great early landmarks. In Germany Tieck, inspired by the Alabaster *Roxana* print first republished in 1825, prepared a reconstruction of the Fortune Theatre, the

<sup>1</sup> German scholars have contributed to every serious branch of Shakespeare scholarship, and Ebisch and Schucking's *Bibliography* indicates the specific contributions of such men as Aronstein, Bolte, Brandl, Brotanek, Albert Cohn, Creizenach, Eckhardt, Elze, Rudolf Fischer, Wilhelm Franz, Gaedertz, Gundolf, Hermann Isaac, Wolfgang Keller, Leon Kellner, Koepfel, Leo, Loening, Otto Ludwig, Morsbach, Sarrazin, Alexander Schmidt, Schucking, Sievers, Victor, Walzel, and Max J. Wolff.

first attempt of its kind. His influence on German stage practice was profound. In England 1844 saw the first attempt, under Planché, to produce a play in the Elizabethan manner. It was *The Taming of the Shrew*, done before curtains, without scenery, and with locality boards. Delius was concerned with stage conditions and contemporary stage directions, but the great impetus came with the publication of the Swan drawing in K. T. Gaedertz's *Zur Kenntnis der altenglischen Bühne*, 1888. This was taken up by scholars everywhere, and Genée, Brodmeier, Wegener, Neuendorff and Creizenach in Germany, and G. F. Reynolds, W. J. Lawrence, William Archer, V. Albright, T. S. Graves, A. H. Thorndike, J. Q. Adams, C. W. Wallace, Lily B. Campbell, together with A. Feuillerat all contributed fact and theory to build up the picture presented in E. K. Chambers's monumental *Elizabethan Stage*, 1923. Of outstanding merit, in their different approaches, are the contributions of G. F. Reynolds, of W. J. Lawrence, of William Poel and the Elizabethan Stage Society, and above all of W. W. Greg in his *Henslowe's Diary* (1904 and 1908), and his indispensable *Documents of the Elizabethan Playhouse*, 1931. The present writer has endeavoured to pursue new paths in *Shakespeare as Man of the Theatre* and *Production and Stage Management at the Blackfriars Theatre*. The most valuable application of theatrical knowledge to the criticism of the plays is in H. Granville-Barker's exhaustive *Prefaces to Shakespeare*, 1927 and 1930.

The eighteenth century, in Theobald and Upton, was concerned with problems of grammar, but no formal study was written until E. A. Abbott's *Shakespeare Grammar*, 1869. Continental scholars contributed much. Wilhelm Franz's *Shakespeare-Grammatik*, 1898-1900, is the standard work. Henry Bradley, Wyld and Jespersen have illuminated Shakespeare's linguistic practice. Wilhelm Victor, Zachrisson, Ekwall and Sievers have built up Shakespeare's pronunciation, following in the wake of A. J. Ellis, 1867-89, and using the old grammarians reprinted by Brotanek. Percy Simpson (1910) and A. W. Pollard have revolutionised the study of punctuation, and George Gordon's *Shakespeare's English* (1928) is the best short discussion of vocabu-

lary. The study of Shakespeare's language has been facilitated by a host of glossaries and concordances. In 1790 S. Ayscough's *Index* was the first comprehensive concordance; 1822 saw Nares's *Glossary*, and 1845 Mrs Cowden Clarke's *Complete Concordance*. Nares was valuably enlarged by Halliwell and Wright in 1859. Dyce's valuable glossary appeared in 1864, and 1874 produced A. Schmidt's indispensable *Shakespeare Lexicon*. J. Bartlett's standard *Concordance* appeared in 1894, and the most recent and valuable publications are C. T. Onions's *Shakespeare Glossary* (1911) and Skeat and Mayhew's *Glossary of Tudor and Stuart Words* (1914).

On the borderline of scholarship and aesthetics lies the newly fashionable study of imagery on psychological principles. Walter Whiter opened the subject in 1794. William Spalding had some penetrating remarks in 1833. Halpin and the old Shakespeare Society, and Furnivall and the New Shakspeare Society, were not unconcerned with processes and with specific fields of imagery, but not until the present century, largely in the wake of the fashion for Donne and the Metaphysicals, did the problem become acute. In 1918 (published 1924) H. W. Wells made a penetrating analysis of Elizabethan *Poetic Imagery*; G. Rylands's *Words and Poetry* (1928) was a sensitive study. Elizabeth Holmes in 1929 published *Aspects of Elizabethan Imagery*; Edmund Blunden in *Shakespeare's Significances* (1928) brought a poet's knowledge of processes to the imagery of *King Lear*. G. Wilson Knight in *The Wheel of Fire*, 1930, *The Imperial Theme*, 1931, and *Shakespeare's Tempest*, 1932, made stimulating if not always acceptable suggestions, and Caroline Spurgeon has tackled the problem methodically and as a whole by means of card indexes, and has issued samples of her findings in *Leading motives in the Imagery of Shakespeare's Tragedies*, 1930, and *Shakespeare's Iterative Imagery*, 1931. Of considerable value is the renewed attention given to the psychological background of Shakespeare's plays. The pioneer was Richard Loening in his *Ueber die physiologischen Grundlagen der Shakespeareschen Psychologie* in the *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch* for 1895, followed by S. Singer in the *Jahrbuch* for 1900. More recently a brilliant band of American scholars, including M. W.



Bundy, Hardin Craig, Ruth L. Anderson, Lily B. Campbell and W. W. Lawrence, have contributed materially to our understanding of Elizabethan conceptions of physiological psychology and their significance in interpreting the plays. American scholars have also contributed largely to the study of the relations between Shakespeare and his contemporaries. A. H. Thorndike's *Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare*, 1901, was of pioneer importance, and his *Relations of Hamlet to Contemporary revenge plays*, 1902, and E. E. Stoll's *Marston and the Malcontent Type*, 1906, and his *Hamlet: An historical and comparative study*, 1919, provide the best type of comparative study. Rounded pictures of Shakespeare are still scarce, but outstanding works include R. M. Alden's *Shakespeare*, 1922, J. Q. Adams's *Life of William Shakespeare*, 1923, Sidney Lee's valuable and standard repository *A Life of William Shakespeare*, E. K. Chambers's exhaustive survey of problems *William Shakespeare*, 2 volumes, 1930, and Walter Raleigh's brilliant sketch, 1907. George Brandes's *William Shakespeare*, 1896, despite its many faults did much for Shakespeare on the Continent, and the German lives by A. Brandl and by Max J. Wolff have perhaps been unjustly neglected in this country.

The last direction of research is the bibliographical, and here the results have been brilliant and spectacular. In *Notes and Queries*, one of the most valuable nineteenth-century repositories of minor Shakespeare scholarship, on July 1st, 1871, Richard Simpson asked, *Are there any extant MSS in Shakespeare's handwriting?* and was the first to suggest that part of *Sir Thomas More* was in Shakespeare's autograph. 'The way in which the letters are formed is absolutely the same as the way in which they are formed in the signatures of Shakespeare', and on September 21st, 1872, James Spedding said, 'To know what kind of hand Shakespeare wrote would often help to discover what words he wrote'. Henry Bradley in 1906 suggested 'that the conjectural criticism of Elizabethan texts has hitherto taken far too little into account the peculiarities of the handwriting of the period. . . . It would be a considerable help to textual critics if some one would compile a judiciously classified list of the kinds of mistakes most

frequently met with in the original editions of sixteenth century works'. Since then the stream has grown in force, and through Sir E. M. Thompson's *Shakespeare's Handwriting*, 1916, *Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of 'Sir Thomas More,'* 1923, and W. W. Greg's careful edition of the play in 1911 conviction has grown to support specific and detailed study of the text in the light of known peculiarities of Elizabethan handwriting, and with the collaboration at different points of Hilary Jenkinson, R. B. McKerrow, A. W. Pollard and W. W. Greg, *The New Shakespeare* (1921- ), under the textual direction of J. Dover Wilson, is examining afresh all disputed and many undisputed readings. The main direction of bibliographical investigation, however, is concerned with the copy for the printer, and the transmission of the text. The problem emerged in the pioneer work done by A. W. Pollard, W. W. Greg and W. J. Neidig in clearing up the mystery of *Certain false dates in Shakespearean quartos* (*The Library*, 1908). A. W. Pollard, the Dean of living bibliographers, in *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*, 1909, *A New Shakespeare Quarto, Richard II*, 1598 (1916), *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates*, 1917 and 1920, and *The Foundations of Shakespeare's Text*, 1923, has revolutionised the study of the transmission of the text, and instituted valuable categories of 'Good and Bad Quartos', of the highest promise for future research. The full story of the adventure still remains to be published by Dr Pollard. The Bibliographical Society, and the Malone Society (1907) have both ensured the success of the bibliographical method, and the new Oxford edition of the works by R. B. McKerrow will embody all the findings.

The eighteenth century was the great age of pioneers working in a virgin forest of text, annotating it, and opening up fields of scholarly research under the direction of a growing idolatry and furor. The nineteenth century is so richly strewn with monographs and learned articles that the paths, when they can be seen, are found to be, in the main, the work of journeymen, often inspired journeymen it is true, contributing each his portion to the cleaning up of the text, the formation of a picture of Shakespeare the dramatist, and his relations with the age he

lived in. The century was so confused by conflicting loyalties to ethical and scientific positions that much of its most valuable work was achieved in spite of the times. During the last fifty years a growing realism of attack has produced a vast quantity of new pioneer work revising the whole field, working at first hand on neglected or misunderstood documents, questioning old orthodoxies with the higher criticism of intensive and minute bibliographical inquiry, and, in effect, throwing the whole mass of Shakespeare scholarship once more into the melting-pot. These minuter studies are in danger of obscuring the general picture of Shakespeare's achievement, but in three directions at least, the text, the theatre, and the poetry, there are signs of concentrated attack of the highest promise for the desired synthesis. It would seem as though the future of Shakespeare scholarship lies in the organisation of new co-operative methods. A systematic stock-taking of what has already been achieved will indicate much of what remains to be done. The new objectivity of research to-day is particularly favourable to such methods. By proper allocation and apportionment of tasks between the Shakespeare Association of England, the Shakespeare Association of America, and the German Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, and by organised University seminar work on specific problems, many of the projects at present beyond the individual's capacity could be brought to fruition. We need a complete picture of Elizabethan authorship, patronage, literary groupings, publication, etc., on the lines suggested by Sheavyn, Evelyn Albright and McKerrow: we need a real survey of Shakespeare's predecessors and the evolution of the earlier drama: we need, surprisingly enough, a satisfactory history and classification of Elizabethan drama as a whole: we need the full truth about the growth of Renaissance drama, and an exact account of Shakespeare's own theatrical practice and how far it conforms with or differs from the common behaviour of the time: we want to know about the inn-yards and the Academic Drama (a volume of translations from the Latin would in itself acquire merit): we need a full study of Shakespeare's language, his powers and paths of creation, and his processes of imagery in chronological evolution: we need a

systematic comparison of all Shakespeare's writings with their source materials, and a concise account of the findings: we need a clear intellectual history of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages. All these, and a hundred other practical and realisable tasks still remain to be completed, and not until they have been settled can we hope for a satisfying and scholarly account of 'The Mind and Art of Shakespeare'.

# SHAKESPEARE IN THE THEATRE FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE PRESENT TIME<sup>1</sup>

BY

HAROLD CHILD

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PUBLIC stage-plays were prohibited by Parliament in September 1642. The prohibition was far from effectual; and one way of getting round it was the performance, under pretence of rope-dancing and the like, of 'drolls', that is, extracts from plays or abbreviations of plays. Among these may have been the *Merry Conceits of Bottom the Weaver*, published with others in 1673. But the theatrical events of the Interregnum have little direct bearing on the subsequent history of Shakespeare. The first play by Shakespeare to be acted after (or perhaps just before) the Restoration was apparently *Pericles*, staged in the spring or summer of 1660 at the Phoenix or Cockpit playhouse in Drury Lane by a company of young players collected by John Rhodes, a bookseller, who had formerly been wardrobe keeper at the Blackfriars Theatre. Of this company Betterton (then, perhaps, twenty-five years old), who had been apprenticed to the book-selling, was a member, and soon a notable one. Another company, chiefly composed of old players of King Charles I's days, was acting at the Red Bull playhouse in Clerkenwell, and a third was set up by William Beeston at the playhouse in Salisbury Court, Whitefriars. Any Shakespeare which these companies acted must have been performed as near as possible in the pre-

<sup>1</sup> No account has been taken in this chapter of productions outside the United Kingdom.

Rebellion manner—whatever that may have become. The changes came in gradually, and began with a restriction on the freedom of the drama. In August 1660 an order was issued for a grant to Thomas Killigrew and Sir William D'Avenant of exclusive power to create two companies of players and to build two theatres; and this restriction was scarcely affected by a grant to George Jolly of power to keep a 'nursery' of young players. By November D'Avenant had formed his company, called the Duke's, chiefly out of Rhodes's young men, but without the best of them, Kynaston; and Killigrew formed the King's Company chiefly out of the old actors, but adding to them Kynaston. A few dates may here be useful. *November 8th*, 1660: the King's Company moved from the Red Bull to Gibbons's tennis-court in Vere Street, where the Stoll picture-house now stands. *June* 1661: the Duke's Company opened its new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. *May* 1663: the King's Company moved to its new theatre (sometimes called the first Drury Lane) between Brydges Street and Drury Lane. 1671: the Duke's Company opened its new and grand theatre in Dorset Garden, Salisbury Court. *January 25th*, 1672: the first Drury Lane was burned down, and the King's Company moved for a time into the Duke's old theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. *March 2nd*, 1674: the second Drury Lane, built by Wren, was opened by the King's Company. *November* 1682: the two companies, amalgamated into one, began to act at Drury Lane. 1695: Betterton and others seceded from Drury Lane and set up in a new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. 1705: this company moved to the great new theatre built by Sir John Vanbrugh in the Haymarket. 1708: the two companies again amalgamated and acted at Drury Lane. 1710: Betterton died.

On December 12th, 1660, a royal warrant gave D'Avenant the exclusive right to the performance of *The Tempest*, *Measure for Measure*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *King Henry VIII*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*, and two months' right in *Pericles*. On August 20th, 1668, another warrant gave the Duke's *Timon of Athens*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *King Henry VI*; and on January 12th, 1669, the King's were granted

*The Winter's Tale*, *King John*, *King Richard II*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *King Henry IV*, *King Richard III*, *Coriolanus*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Julius Caesar*, *Othello* (called *The Moor of Venice*), *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Cymbeline*. D'Avenant, that is, having first pick, chose four tragedies that were likely to be popular, only four comedies (on three of which he certainly, and on the fourth probably, had designs) and, in *King Henry VIII*, the most spectacular of the histories. The King's Company, being mainly composed of old actors, would not be very ill-content with the old ways. D'Avenant, ever an innovator, had new ideas. He expressly asked for a warrant of December 12th, 1660, for the purpose of 'reforming' the plays named in it and 'making them fit' for his company, and he soon showed what he meant.

On August 24th, 1661, Pepys went to Lincoln's Inn Fields ('the Opera', he calls it) and there saw *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, done with scenes very well. On February 18th, 1662, he saw at the same theatre *The Law against Lovers*, 'a good play and well performed, especially the little girl'... dancing and singing; and were it not for her, the loss of Roxalana would spoil the house'. Here already are two new factors to consider, scenes and women-players.

It was not, in all probability, D'Avenant at his 'Opera', but Killigrew with his old actors in Vere Street, who first brought upon the public stage professional actresses. On December 8th, 1660, he produced *Othello*, with Mrs Hughes as Desdemona and Mrs Rutter as Emilia. But D'Avenant's theatre was the first to foreshadow the incalculable change which this meant in the presentation of Shakespeare. Mr Granville-Barker has pointed out how Shakespeare took advantage of the convention of his time to avoid—even in *Romeo and Juliet* and in *Antony and Cleopatra*—direct sex-appeal, and to give his women-characters insight and humour, a quick wit and a shrewd tongue instead. The introduction of actresses—especially in a period of great sexual freedom and in a theatre more directly than before under

the favour of a licentious Court—showed a lack in Shakespeare which the Restoration people very quickly tried to fill. Hence 'the little girl' in *The Law against Lovers* (which, in spite of its title, was a Shakespearian work). She is only a pert little piece, of no importance to the play; but she is a very early example of that exploitation of femininity which was to lead to some surprising liberties with the plays of Shakespeare, and to continue even into the nineteenth century. And already we find Pepys lamenting the absence of a certain actress, Roxalana, the beautiful Mrs Davenport, who had lately been lured off the stage by a mock-marriage with a nobleman.

*Hamlet* was 'done with scenes very well'; and once more we are on the edge of a difference—not yet great but destined to become so—between the playing of Shakespeare before and after the Interregnum. Before the closing of the playhouses the public stage had been learning from the masques about spectacle and the decoration of drama; and D'Avenant, whose *Salmacida Spolia* (1640) was the last of the royal masques, produced some time in 1656 in a room behind Rutland House, Aldersgate Street, his 'opera', *The Siege of Rhodes*, which had 'scenes in perspective'. These scenes consisted of permanent side-wings painted to represent rocks and cliffs, and of shutters, or flats, which could be run together and changed, in sight of the audience, to make different backgrounds. There was no attempt at creating the illusion that what the audience saw was not a stage setting but a real place. The old hangings had been replaced by pictures, that was all; and the pictures were framed within a proscenium. The stage still projected a long way in front of the proscenium; and, although the inner stage of the pre-war days had been increased in size and in importance, the art of acting was still largely the art of declamation and gesture on an open platform with the audience on three sides of it. Yet the implications of the change were important. In the first place, the complete and definite localisation of the scene had at least begun. For a century and more the changing of a scene would go on taking place in sight of the audience by the drawing back of the flats, while a player, standing at ease on the fore-stage, would see, say, his library walls



disappear and himself thus transferred from his home to anywhere else that the dramatist might please; but the idea of localisation was at work, and was to lead to much difficulty and violence in the production on a localised stage of so loosely localised and occasionally unlocalised a drama as Shakespeare's. Secondly, the idea of scenery and of spectacle as things to be cultivated for their own sakes was transferred from the masques (specially composed for such purposes) to drama that had been written for very different purposes; and the implication was that that drama might be sacrificed at pleasure to the claims of scenery and spectacle.

It was, however, by no means only the new toys they had to play with—actresses, painted scenes and mechanical devices—which induced the men of the Restoration to tamper with the drama of Shakespeare. They had their principles. D'Avenant, at any rate, had; and during his lifetime (he died in 1668) the treatment of Shakespeare at his theatre was determined by these principles more than by the presence of actresses and much more than by the desire for scenic display. The King's Company went on playing Shakespeare abbreviated but not adapted—with one exception. That exception was a rough, coarse version of *The Taming of the Shrew*, called *Sauny the Scot*, attributed to Lacy, who himself played Sauny (Grumio). This prose play, with its new fifth act and very homely humour, suggests something botched up for surreptitious performance after the war was over and Lacy, a lieutenant in the King's army, had returned to civil life. But this sort of treatment was the very opposite of D'Avenant's. D'Avenant has been called 'almost a prude'. To him Shakespeare was an author who needed not coarsening but refining, especially in his comedies. Let us agree at once (with *The Tempest* shortly to come under notice) that some of the Restoration refinement can make our own stomachs turn; but there is evidence in Pepys that Shakespeare's comedies, as they stood, seemed to that age 'silly'; and that in comedy and tragedy alike, they believed they could improve him by means of what they had learned from Ben Jonson and from France. D'Avenant and his followers were half-hearted and inconsistent.

They did not always observe the unities of time and place, nor always keep tragedy and comedy apart, nor always avoid violent action on the stage. But they strove for symmetry of plot and balance of persons and consistency of character; they tried to make the action easy to follow, and every word of the dialogue comprehensible and strictly to the point. They tried to polish and to regulate; and Shakespeare, himself a valiant adapter, would probably have admitted them right in principle, and laughed, or sworn, at the havoc they made of his poetry, his fancy, the range and freedom of his thought and knowledge. It was scarcely their fault they did not know when to let well alone. The record by Downes that Betterton was coached in *Hamlet* by D'Avenant, who had seen the part acted by Taylor, who had succeeded Burbage in it, seems to imply a care for the pure tradition; and *Hamlet*, in fact, was only pretty drastically cut, especially in the long speeches. Yet even in *Hamlet* D'Avenant could not let the diction alone. He must needs alter it even in the passages marked for omission on the stage. But any journalist who has had to 'reform and make fit' other people's articles will understand how his pen took charge.

Like Garrick (and like Mr J. M. Robertson) D'Avenant had a true reverence for Shakespeare, though belief in it is sorely tried by three of his productions. Pepys's 'little girl' was acting Viola, a character in *The Law against Lovers*, in which D'Avenant ran together *Measure for Measure* and Benedick and Beatrice out of *Much Ado about Nothing*. The refining hand is plainly visible. The language is trimmed and tamed, and prose is turned into blank verse. The low comedy characters are cut out. And Angelo is made respectable: he was only testing Isabella's virtue before he should proclaim his honourable love for her. D'Avenant's *Measure for Measure* was thus changed from tragi-comedy into comedy as D'Avenant understood it. His *Macbeth* shows still more strongly his desire for balance and for consistency. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are both more whole-heartedly and simply evil than in Shakespeare; and to balance the evil pair there must be a consistently good pair, Macduff and Lady Macduff. The Porter must go, since this is a tragedy. At the end all the poetry is cut

out of Macbeth's part; and as for the diction, it is hard to say whether D'Avenant's rhymed couplets or his blundering blank verse are less like the Shakespeare they replace. But they are certainly more refined.

The divell damne thee blacke, thou cream-fac'd Loone:  
Where got'st thou that Goose-looke?

says the Folio.

Now Friend, what means thy change of countenance?

says D'Avenant. But not even refinement can explain the change of

After Lifes fitful Feuer, he sleepes well,  
into

He, after life's short feavor, now sleeps; Well.

Yet the play would doubtless go with a bang in performance (it held the stage till Garrick ousted it); and it was not at first all overlaid with spectacle, as it was to be in 1672. There was, indeed, a good deal of trap-door and flying-machine stuff for witches and ghosts, and the supernatural part was, in general, purged of mystery and revealed in the clear light of acrobatics; but it was not the desire to 'operatise' the play in that sense which led to the chief of D'Avenant's rewriting. Nor was it so even with that very nasty piece of 'refinement', the version of *The Tempest* produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields in November 1667. The idea was D'Avenant's; and at the root of it lies the old desire for balance, consistency and trimness. The execution must be mainly Dryden's, partly because he said so, partly because that great man could be a very nasty writer and D'Avenant was never that, and partly because (with due weight given to his *Troilus and Cressida*) Dryden was too good a poet to tinker needlessly with Shakespeare's verse as D'Avenant did; and on the whole this *Tempest* is freer from that vice than the *Macbeth* or *The Law against Lovers*. But all the mystery, the charm, the wisdom have been sacrificed to symmetry, to consistency and to the 'love-interest' which from now on asserts itself more and more in adaptations from Shakespeare. Miranda (who had never seen a man) and Ferdinand must be balanced by Hippolito (who

had never seen a woman) and Dorinda, another daughter for Prospero. Caliban must have a sister, Sycorax, who makes amorous advances to 'Trincalo', and even Ariel must have 'a gentle Spirit for his Love', named Milcha, whose only use is to dance with him at the close. The cast (as usual in these adaptations) is cut down, but the comedy of the sailors (made much 'lower' comedy than before) is retained. The whole is the capital example of the difference between the two conceptions of dramatic form. The Restoration (and the men that followed upon it) honestly thought that they were refining the rough work of an artless genius.

D'Avenant, no doubt, loved spectacle and the devices of stagecraft. His production of *King Henry VIII* was splendid with costumes, processions and 'shows' (or tableaux, as we might call them) of massed figures—some of them, no doubt, painted in perspective. But meanwhile the King's Company in Vere Street and at Drury Lane were staging other than Shakespearian plays with even greater splendour; and it was after D'Avenant's death in 1668 and the opening in November 1671 of the theatre in Dorset Garden, which he had projected, that Betterton, now in fact in control, went to lengths in this respect at which even D'Avenant might have hesitated. It was in April 1674 that Dorset Garden staged Shadwell's alteration of D'Avenant and Dryden's *Tempest*, in which (though the changes in the book are not great) the intention is frankly not drama but entertainment by music, spectacle and dancing.

Now the turn of the tragedies had come. It has been suggested that this was partly because the years 1678–82 were full of political anxiety; and that then, as round about 1715 and in other internal crises, the theatre sought wisdom from Shakespeare's tragedies, especially from *Coriolanus* and from *King Richard II*. This does not, however, altogether explain the rush of rehandling Shakespeare, in all degrees from almost total re-writing to adaptive alteration, which in those years involved half a score of the tragedies. Perhaps Rymer's book on *The Tragedies of the Last Age* (1678) had some influence; but before that was published Dryden had, in *All for Love*, taken a Shake-

spearian theme, that of *Antony and Cleopatra*, and written on it a play which exemplified his views of dramatic construction, especially in the matter of balance of characters. This play was produced at Drury Lane in 1677-8. At the same theatre in 1678 Ravenscroft made *Titus Andronicus* more horrible than the original. In that year also Dorset Garden saw Shadwell's workmanlike version of *Timon of Athens*, with a strong love-interest added, and not too much bother about the rules, and Dryden's still more workmanlike *Troilus and Cressida*, a regular tragedy, with characters so consistent and elevated that Cressida is a faithful and ill-used heroine. In 1679 So Otway's *Caius Marius*, packing *Romeo and Juliet* off into the most unhomelike exile in ancient Rome, first allowed Juliet (Lavinia) to wake before Romeo (Marius junior) is dead, thus setting a fashion which prevailed into the nineteenth century. And, probably in December 1680, we come upon him whom a good critic has called not the villain but the clown of the piece, Nahum Tate. His *King Richard II* (quickly suppressed by authority, and vainly revived as *The Sicilian Usurper*), with its uxorious hero, its whiffs of the 'love-and-honour' essence of heroic tragedy, its low-comedy York and the trick table which robbed the imprisoned monarch of his victuals, was acted at Drury Lane; it was the other house that early in 1681 put on his adaptation of *King Lear*, which, giving Cordelia a lover in Edgar, cutting out the Fool, and arranging a happy ending with Lear alive and Cordelia married, kept Shakespeare's *King Lear* from the stage till Edmund Kean's day. What Tate thought he was doing to improve *Coriolanus* when, at Drury Lane in 1681-2, he turned it into *The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth* is harder still to discern; and the increased love-interest, with suicide, attempted rape and other dainty devices, could not make a success of the clumsy and untidy piece, even with its first hearers. There remain to be mentioned Crowne's two pretty workmanlike adaptations from *King Henry VI*, both acted at Dorset Garden in 1680 and 1681: *Henry VI, The First Part*, and *The Mervy of Civil War*; and an adaptation by D'Urfey of *Cymbeline*, acted at Drury Lane at a date uncertain, under the title of *The Injur'd Princess*, which

trims up Shakespeare's play and adds a nice little new plot which includes the exhibition on the stage of an attempted rape and the putting out of Pisanio's eyes.

After 1682, when rivalry between the two houses was stilled by the amalgamation and Betterton found himself in possession of the King's Company's repertory as well as of his own, the rush of new versions ceased, although the political incentive had not been withdrawn. The next notable adaptation was not seen for ten years; and then Betterton went further than D'Avenant had ever done in making a fine show of music and machines. *The Fairy Queen* was a version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* produced at the Dorset Garden house in 1692. Purcell's music endears its memory; but what its first audiences enjoyed more was the scenery and the spectacle. The extant descriptions of the scenery show that by this time the public stage was surpassing all that the masques had done. If this 'opera' achieved only half that it aimed at, it must have been a triumph of ingenuity in the use of shutters or flats, cut-out wings and scenes, back cloths, running water and much else. It is only fair to note that the text was not very grievously knocked about. The dialogue was tamed a little, and there was some re-arrangement of scenes to make room for all the music, dancing and spectacle, in which monkeys and Chinese persons and properties had a place. Though too costly to make much profit, the show was a great success; and it tipped the scales heavily against simplicity in the production of Shakespeare's comedies. Between 1695 and the death of Betterton in 1710, more of the same sort of thing was produced by him at Lincoln's Inn Fields and the new theatre in the Haymarket. In 1699 came *Measure for Measure*, probably arranged by Charles Gildon, which, throwing overboard not only all the comic characters but also all D'Avenant's interpolations from *Much Ado about Nothing*, goes back towards the original and presents a compact play, short enough to leave plenty of room for the masque and other spectacular and musical additions. In 1701 came *The Jew of Venice*, by George Granville, Lord Lansdowne. Because Shylock was played by Dogget, it has been supposed that Granville made the part purely comic; but there

is no warrant for that in the text of his version. His Shylock is not so far from Shakespeare's as the rest of the play; once more we have a trimmed, debased and neatly jointed action, with room in it for a great masque. Very much worse was Charles Burnaby's dull and vulgar version of *Twelfth Night*, called *Love Betray'd* (Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1703), altered to make room for a masque that was never presented. Meanwhile, for Drury Lane John Dennis had prepared his tedious and dirty perversion of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, called *The Comical Gallant* (1702). Finally, one very famous adaptation of a tragedy belongs to this period, Colley Cibber's *King Richard III*, produced at Drury Lane in 1700 and maintained on the stage whole or in part until very recent times. Cibber's work is not to be lightly condemned. It is a hodge-podge of several of the Histories; much of the added dialogue is flat and poor, and there is some 'love-interest' and some added violence. But Cibber's Richard is a finer part for a 'star' than Shakespeare's, and his whole play is first-rate 'theatre'.

*Othello*, *Julius Caesar*, *King Henry IV*, *Hamlet*—these four were left unmangled, save for some reasonable cutting. For the rest, the age had set an example of altering Shakespeare, and that example was pretty consistently followed till within living memory. But in the next era, in which the leading theatre was chiefly under the management of Wilks, Dogget, Colley Cibber, Barton Booth and Steele in various combinations, a physical change was made of an importance which few can have then foreseen. In order to make the pit bigger, Rich, the manager of Drury Lane, cut off some of the fore-stage. The more open the platform, the more chance there was for a drama of a free and fluid structure. The more the play was pushed back towards and behind the proscenium arch, the more need there was for a new technique in production; and henceforth there was a continuous series of attempts (culminating in the theatre of Beerbohm Tree) to fit Shakespeare not (as Dryden, D'Avenant and their like had) into new critical rules, but into a stage for which his plays were not written.

The period between Betterton and Garrick was, on the whole,

a good time for Shakespeare. The Opera (as Vanbrugh's theatre had become) in the Haymarket, by putting on spectacular productions, was relieving Shakespeare and the drama of that liability; and when, in the seventeen-twenties, Rich started pantomime at Lincoln's Inn Fields and Drury Lane followed suit, the relief was even greater. It seems possible, indeed, that scenically Shakespeare was kept rather short. At Drury Lane his plays were mounted decently, but they were not pampered. It speaks all the better for the age that so many of them were in favour. The Restoration versions prevailed for the most part; but Lincoln's Inn Fields played Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, not Tate's, and revived several other plays which had been neglected. And the period was not prolific in new adaptations. In 1716 two people made farces out of the Sly business in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and a musician made a comic masque out of the clowns in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In 1719 Drury Lane staged a very bad version of *Julius Caesar*, and also (not without an eye on the Pretender and the '15) a dismal sort of cold shape made by Dennis out of *Coriolanus* and called *The Invader of his Country*; and Lincoln's Inn Fields (politics again) tried Theobald's *King Richard II*, with a new love-interest in it. Aaron Hill dandified *King Henry V*, and there were others; but these feeble versions, in the best of which 'refinement' seems the only purpose, did not last, whereas the Restoration versions for the most part did. The last years of the period showed a decided swing back towards Shakespeare. In 1737 or thereabouts *King Richard II*, without either Theobald or Tate, and *King Henry V*, with all the comic characters put back, were played at Covent Garden (the new theatre opened in December 1732). And in 1740-41 came Macklin—Macklin who dressed *Macbeth* in Scottish garments; who restored at Drury Lane Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, and, rescuing Shylock from low comedians like Griffin, presented what his age, at any rate, accepted as 'The Jew that Shakespeare drew'—a monster of malevolence and cunning. It has been suggested that to Macklin's influence was due also the restoration at Drury Lane of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. The movement back to Shakespeare was well on



its way when Garrick took the town by storm. The productions had interpolated music (by Arne and other good composers), and dances between the acts; but spectacle was not a rival of drama, and the notion of 'improving' Shakespeare by the rules was weakening fast.

Then came Garrick, bursting into fame at an unlicensed, unfashionable theatre, Goodman's Fields, which in 1740-41 had put on *The Winter's Tale* and *All's Well that Ends Well*, showing how the vogue of Shakespeare's comedies had spread in the first half of the century. Garrick came in on the crest of the wave of Shakespearian study by more or less competent pre-Johnson editors, and in the dawn of the 'return to nature' which heralded the romantic movement. As actor, there can be little question of his influence for good. If it be true that, when Benedick said, 'Hang me in a bottle like a cat and shoot at me', Garrick described in pantomime every step in the process, he would have to do it with extraordinary brilliance and swiftness of gesture not to be considered by modern taste a fussy player with little sense of proportion; and in Abel Drugger and other parts he was capable of irrelevant clowning. On the other hand, Davies's description of his Hamlet is alone enough to prove that by his power and range of personal expression he substituted representation for the fine old formal declamation of Quin and the others, and paved the way for the romantics, Edmund Kean, even Edwin Forrest and Junius Brutus Booth. In staging, too, he worked reforms. It is no longer believed that he introduced footlights; but in France he learned a good deal about lighting, which he used. He engaged good scene-painters (among them De Louthembourg, whom, however, he apparently never allowed to paint a single scene for Shakespeare); and in 1765 gave their work a fair chance of being seen by banishing the audience from the stage. He brought back the decency and trimness of setting which had declined since Cibber and his friends were fresh at Drury Lane; and before the end of his long reign he had carried forward the movement (begun at least as far back as Aaron Hill) towards appropriate period and place in costume—his *King Lear* of 1776, for instance, was 'judiciously habited in old

English dresses', or, at any rate, what the critic of the *London Chronicle* took for such. And, 'star' though he was, the testimony of Mrs Clive and others seems to show that he at least had an inkling of a play as a single work of art, and of his players as parts of a whole, not merely as support for himself. Finally, he gave Shakespeare an enormous vogue, and set him up on a pedestal; and it was not all his fault (since many of the best critics of his time admired his taste) that, when we look at the pedestal, we see at the top not Shakespeare but a Roubiliac convention of Shakespeare. He played a great deal of Shakespeare, with the great tragedies (except *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*), five of the comedies and two of the histories very frequently in the bill. And he did much to restore the purity of the text to the stage. His *Macbeth* (1744) had a brand-new dying scene for Macbeth, but it cut out the D'Avenant stuff about Lady Macduff. He restored, very nearly in their true form, *Coriolanus* (1754), *The Tempest* (1757), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1759), and *Cymbeline* (1761)—Posthumus being one of his best parts. He brought back some of Shakespeare (especially of his language) into *Romeo and Juliet* (1754), though Otway's notion of a dying scene between the lovers in the tomb held on till Kemble; into *King Lear* (1756)—but not very much; and into *Timon of Athens* (1771). But he made, or caused to be made, little entertainments out of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*, and a neat little pastoral out of *The Winter's Tale*, and he had *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* thoroughly reformed and made fit. None of this is very bad; but Garrick did what not even Dryden had dared to do: he laid hands on the structure and the story of *Hamlet*. That was in 1772, when his head had been more than a little turned by the adulation with which Paris had backed up London's willingness to believe him a great critic as well as a great actor; and his defiance of Voltaire had almost compelled him to prove that Shakespeare (with a little help from David Garrick) was not really a vulgar barbarian. It was, in fact, from Voltaire himself, in *L'Appel à toutes les nations de l'Europe*, that Garrick took much of his scheme for improving *Hamlet*. The result was never printed; but Professor

Odell has collected all the available accounts of it, contemporary and later, and these strongly suggest that, besides cutting out the grave-diggers and otherwise obliging Voltaire, Garrick did indeed alter the play 'in the spirit of Bottom the Weaver' and make his own part 'fatter' than it was. But he acted it so well that his version lived on, to be taken up by Henderson in 1777. The worst effect of Garrick as a whole was that he lent his great reputation as a student and champion of Shakespeare to the notion that Shakespeare was raw material, to be worked up by anyone who thought himself clever enough. That example was eagerly followed by Tate Wilkinson, for instance, and the provincial theatres which were growing in scope and importance. And with Drury Lane leading the way, no wonder Covent Garden and the Haymarket (let Theophilus Cibber rage against Garrick as he might) felt free to alter *Romeo and Juliet*, *King John*, *Cymbeline* and *Coriolanus* as they pleased. But it was at Covent Garden that George Colman, in 1763, restored a good deal of Shakespeare, in place of a good deal of Tate, to *King Lear*.

After Garrick's retirement in 1776, it is best to hurry on to John Philip Kemble. Kemble could not do his best while he was managing Drury Lane for Sheridan, the old house from 1780 to 1793, and the new, and much enlarged, house from 1794 to 1802; yet it was for the big stage of the new house that he ordered of William Capon the obviously very romantic scenery which (possibly taking a lesson from what De Louthembourg had done for *The Tempest* in 1777) brought the production of Shakespeare a long step nearer the later idea of illusion. Mrs Siddons had very lately discarded the old tragedy-queen head-dress and hoops for a more appropriate garb; and in the opening production of *Macbeth* the witches shared with the new scenery the attempt to express the romantic, the sinister, the supernatural. As manager of Covent Garden from 1803 till it was burnt in 1808, and again of the new house from 1808 till his retirement in 1817, Kemble pretty steadily carried forward a treatment of Shakespeare which combined the historic sense with what is now called stylisation. He went some way towards dressing the characters of Hamlet and Macbeth in the clothes

which he thought they would have worn. His scenery was 'stock', and used for many different plays; and so long as the proscenium doors, with the windows over them, were put to important use in the action of the play (the windows were abolished in the new Covent Garden) no real illusion was possible; yet it seems clear that the scenery was intended for more than a mere painted setting. The acting of John Kemble himself—yes, and of the divine Sarah Siddons also—might seem retrograde Quinwards from the quick naturalism of Garrick; it must indeed necessarily have been formalised and simplified by the ever increasing size of the playhouse. Yet it fitted into his dramatic scheme; and his very care to give names to the smallest of the characters left unnamed by Shakespeare joins with all that can be known of his work to imply that he saw, even better than did Garrick, each play as a whole, and tried to give each its proper artistic expression. Moreover, when he had his way, he produced a great deal of Shakespeare; and though the public taste and the size of the theatre forced him to spend a great deal of money on spectacular productions that were not Shakespeare, he mounted Shakespeare always well and sometimes superbly. The worst that can be said against him was that he had too little respect for the text. It would not be kind to hold up against him the first intrusion of the opera-making Reynolds (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) in 1816, when his hold on things had weakened; but he brought back Dorinda and Hippolito into *The Tempest* after Garrick had ousted them; he played Tate's *King Lear*, Garrick's *Romeo and Juliet*, and other such versions. We must remember that all the time he was trying to interpret by one technique plays written for another; and credit him with having put back a good deal of the original into *Measure for Measure* and *The Merchant of Venice* among others; and his acting versions show no conceit about the rules and very little distortion merely in order to make room for star-acting or for scenic display. This was a good time for Shakespeare; and if John Kemble could have had his way it would have been a better. A large number of his plays were in regular performance. He had outlived in the theatre all the other dramatists of his time except

Massinger, and his text, though still cut and distorted, was at least getting free of other people's words.

But with John Kemble's retirement all stability seemed to be lost, and the success of Edmund Kean in and after 1814 brought in new factors and new dangers. Kean was no pedantic improver; he wanted to play *King Lear* as Shakespeare wrote it; and Elliston at first not only prevented him but also staged so fine a storm that it blew the King out of notice. But whether with or without Elliston or Bunn to manage or mismanage him, Kean was not the man to act Shakespeare consistently and with due care for each play as a whole. He was the first of the great stars—the *virtuosi*, who treated Shakespeare (as some modern executants treat Beethoven) as a means for the exhibition of themselves. Even Hazlitt, his great admirer, begged for fewer 'glancing lights, pointed transitions, and pantomimic evolutions'; and Lewes records his 'sacrifice of the character to a few points'. He was the first and greatest of the romantics, who professed to uphold Nature against convention, and after him came others, Junius Brutus Booth, Edwin Forrest, Barry Sullivan, Fechter—men whose tendency was to exploit the part at the expense of the play and to try and do in the part something that no one had done before. Kean came, moreover, just when there were more opportunities for wandering stars than there had been before. Rivalry and restriction had combined to make the two 'patent' houses so big that, as a contemporary said, a 'national theatre' seemed to mean a theatre large enough to hold the nation, and the very difficulty of keeping them up gave chances to the unlicensed 'minor' theatres. Even before 1843, when Drury Lane and Covent Garden lost their exclusive rights, it was possible for a star-actor to go from theatre to theatre in London, as well as in the provinces, sure of some sort of a company to make a background for him.

Into this instability Macready was not strong enough to bring order. He had not the temperament for a manager; and his obstinacy in frequently changing his bill robbed his Shakespearian work of its best chances with the public. But in his brief spells at Covent Garden (1837-8) and at Drury Lane

(1841-3) he brought back Shakespeare's *King Lear* (even including the Fool, though he, perhaps prudently, gave the part to a girl), *Coriolanus*, and *The Tempest*; and he mounted these and other plays like a student and a gentleman. But now the theatre has to face an old trouble in an exaggerated form. In the eighteen-twenties at Covent Garden Charles Kemble, with Planché's help, had gone far towards historical accuracy in costume and setting. In 1837, at the Haymarket, Benjamin Webster practically abolished the fore-stage. In 1840 at Covent Garden Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris (with Planché and the Grieves to help) got some sort of homogeneous Hellenicism into a beautiful production of Shakespeare's (not Garrick's nor Reynolds's) *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Macready's own productions, especially his *King John* in 1812, were both splendid and scholarly. We have, then, on a 'picture' stage, strictly localised and made as realistic as possible (it is now some two centuries since the live sparrows in *Rinaldo* at the Opera, but only half a century before the live rabbits in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Her Majesty's), an elaborate scenic production; and the scenic devices were still so clumsy (as, indeed, they remained till the present century) that though, with the help of 'front cloths', an act might be run through without undue delay, each act would have its 'full set' and these took time to shift. Moreover front cloths at last came to be thought too conventional, and multiplied full sets meant delay within the acts as well as in the intervals between them. The action of the plays, therefore, came to be broken by frequent intervals; and the text to be cut and rearranged to save superfluous scene-changing, and to make the play fit into the time. And if there was (as there nearly always was) a ballet or a grand procession as well, the play had to be cut still shorter. Shakespeare had scarcely won his right to be staged not only with splendour but with fitness and realism when the scenery declared itself once more not his friend but his rival and foe. Already some of the critics were beginning to ask for 'an occasional preference of the suggestive to the actual'; and in 1844 there came a queer, lonely, prophetic act of recognition of the danger. In the course

of his remarkable rule at the Haymarket (1837-53) Benjamin Webster (Planché at his elbow) staged *The Taming of the Shrew* as Shakespeare wrote it, complete, before hangings, without scenery, and in the nearest he could get to the Elizabethan manner.

To this muddled, unstable time two men put an end. Charles Kean (with his wife, Ellen Tree), who had given notable productions of Shakespeare at the Haymarket in 1848, produced at the Princess's Theatre in 1850-59 a famous series of elaborate and scholarly Shakespearian revivals. At Sadler's Wells from 1844 to 1862, and at the Queen's and other theatres afterwards, Samuel Phelps produced all Shakespeare's plays except *King Richard II*, *King Henry VI*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Titus Andronicus*. But whereas Kean's manner of production compelled much cutting and some rearranging of the text, Phelps's simple staging left him free to secure what he most wanted, and that was the play as near as possible in its original state. Kean played Cibber's, not Shakespeare's, *King Richard III*, and put back Locke's music and the singing witches (which Phelps cut out) into *Macbeth*; and some of his suggestions for *King Richard II* strongly suggest the *Savonarola* of Savonarola Brown. This was to be the tradition that came down through Irving to Tree. The ideal of Phelps was that which mainly inspired the Benson Company and (at any rate till recently) the Old Vic.

Between the era of Kean and Phelps and that of Irving there is little worth note. Covent Garden had dropped out; at Drury Lane, with Chatterton struggling bravely on (1863-79), and at the Haymarket under Buckstone (1853-78), it was the star actors and actresses, English and foreign—Barry Sullivan, Helen Faucit, Fechter, Adelaide Neilson, Edwin Booth, Stella Colas, Ristori, Salvini—rather than the plays that drew audiences. With Irving under Bateman (1871-8) at the Lyceum, a great new star-actor, indeed, arose; but with Irving as his own manager (1878-1902), and especially during the earlier years, stability, fashion, popularity and style came back to the presentation of Shakespeare, although comparatively few of the plays were staged. Irving's position was strong and peculiar. He was a

star (which Charles Kean never was), and an individualist; but his acting was as far as possible from the impressionistic display of the romantics. He had a good notion of a play as a single whole; and, though he was forced by his scenery to compress and rearrange, he did nothing so wanton in alteration as Augustin Daly did afterwards. He loved splendour and beauty, and was careful to get the most eminent painters (in days when painters could be very eminent indeed) to design for him; and he liked to fill out the play with significant action (Shylock's return from the supper at Bassanio's to his empty house is a good example); yet his taste, instinctively austere, saved him from the extravagances to which Tree was driven, partly by nature and partly by his desire to go one better than Irving. Only, perhaps, in his version of *Hamlet* did Irving alter the play so as to enhance his own part, and only in *Macbeth* did the prevalent desire for music in the plays send him back to bad old models—in this case to the flying and singing witches (with new music by Sullivan). Other producers of Shakespeare on the same lines—Wilson Barrett, Mary Anderson, Forbes-Robertson, Daly—were committed to some degree or other of compression and alteration. Of these Daly was far the most wanton. Mary Anderson's doubling of Hermione and Perdita was not so disturbing to the play as it sounds, since all she needed to do was to make someone else play Perdita in the last scene. Best of all was Forbes-Robertson's *Hamlet* (1897), which always kept in Fortinbras and began by keeping the scene between Polonius and Reynaldo, and the return of the Danish ambassadors. Realism of setting also brought with it a naturalism in acting (much encouraged by the example of Fechter in 1860) and especially in the speaking of verse, under which the great characters dwindled. Perhaps they dwindled a little more still after the visit of the Saxe-Meiningen company (1881) had brought animated stage-crowds into favour.

Meanwhile, F. R. Benson and his company were on tour, acting as many of Shakespeare's plays, and as much of each as they could, with as simple a setting as they dared. At Stratford-upon-Avon in the spring of 1906 they acted all the Histories;



and during a short season at the Lyceum in 1900 they did *Hamlet* whole. The playgoers—even the critics—did not take to it. Still less did they take to the revolutionary productions of Mr William Poel, who, chiefly in the declining years of Irving and the heyday of Tree, staged for the Elizabethan Stage Society continuous performances of Elizabethan drama without scenery. The critics had begun to complain of too much scenery; but no scenery at all, no stars in the cast, and the strain of listening to a new (or very old) and musical speaking of the poetry, ‘with its consonantal swiftness, its gradations sudden or slow into vowelled liquidity, its comic rushes and stops, with, above all, the peculiar beauty of its rhymes’—this was rather too much. Nevertheless, the heaven worked. This almost purely archaistic method of staging, which presents Shakespeare through the technique for which his plays were designed, has been adopted elsewhere—notably at the Maddermarket Theatre in Norwich; but its greatest service has been to familiarise the theatre with the advantages of continuous and loosely localised performance of the plays according to Shakespeare’s own dramatic plan. In the Granville-Barker productions at the Savoy Theatre (1912–14) the core of that idea was combined, on a stage extended in front of the proscenium, with a cautious, fastidious use of representation in scenery—a combination which has since been adopted by other producers. Scenic device, and especially the pictorial use of light, has so greatly improved of recent years that there is no reason why the two methods should not be used together, so that Shakespeare could be acted with Elizabethan freedom and fluidity and also with the pictorial beauty and the temporal and spatial definition which audiences enjoy. At present the age shows signs of wanting merely to find some way of playing Shakespeare that has never been tried before. Shakespeare is acted in modern dress; all in black and white; on a stage that is all staircase; so lighted that no faces can be seen; and tricks are played with the construction and the tone of plays every whit as daring as those of Tate or of Cibber. Some of these experiments have led to the acting of plays not often acted; and any method that will expose new beauties or even excite new interest in

Shakespeare is to be so far commended. But the best possible base for all experiment would be a strong and active tradition built up on the understanding that Shakespeare, as playwright, knew what he was about. The maintenance of that tradition is too much to ask of the theatre as at present conducted.

## READING LIST

### NOTE

THESE reading lists were compiled by the original contributors to provide illustrations and extensions of their studies. They are here reprinted without alteration; but other books on the particular subjects have of course been published since 1935, and for these the reader is referred to the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, Volume V* and to the *Concise Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*.

### THE LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

ELTON, C. I. *W. Shakespeare, his Family and Friends*. 1904.

Collects and sets forth the facts and documents bearing on Shakespeare's genealogy and connexions.

RALEIGH, SIR W. *Shakespeare*. 'English Men of Letters Series.' 1907.

A masterly biographical study.

BEECHING, H. C. *William Shakespeare, player, playmaker and poet*.

A judicious summary, in short compass, of Shakespeare's life and work.

NEILSON, W. A. and THORNDIKE, A. H. *The Facts about Shakespeare*.

1913.

Useful for reference.

HERFORD, C. H. *A Sketch of recent Shakespeare Investigation*. 1923.

Also useful for reference.

ADAMS, J. QUINGY. *A Life of William Shakespeare*. 1923.

A useful life, correlating the facts of Shakespeare's biography with the history of the Elizabethan stage.

LAMBORN, E. A. G., and HARRISON, G. B. *Shakespeare, the Man and his Stage*. 'The World's Manuals.' 1923.

A first-rate compendium of information; invaluable as a handbook and as an introduction to study of Shakespeare.

LEE, SIR S. L. *A Life of William Shakespeare*. Latest revised and enlarged edition. 1925.

The standard work on the subject until superseded by the work of E. K. Chambers.

BAILEY, J. *Shakespeare*. 1929.

An admirable study.

CHAMBERS, SIR E. K. *William Shakespeare*. 1930.

The most complete and authoritative work on Shakespeare, fully documented, indispensable for all advanced study.

WILSON, J. DOVER. *The Essential Shakespeare; a Biographical Adventure*. 1932.

A stimulating reconstitution of Shakespeare's life and work.

HARRISON, G. B. *Shakespeare at Work [1592-1603]*. 1933.

An interpretation and reconstruction of Shakespeare's life and its background, national and theatrical, during the reign of Elizabeth.

J. W. M.

## THE THEATRES AND COMPANIES

CHAMBERS, SIR E. K. *The Mediaeval Stage*. 2 vols. 1913.

CHAMBERS, SIR E. K. *The Elizabethan Stage*. 4 vols. 1923.

An encyclopaedic study of all matters dealt with in this chapter, in which the facts are set forth and may be examined independently.

FEUILLERAT, A. *Documents relating to the Office of the Revels*. In Bang, *Materialen*, XXI, 1908, and XXIV, 1914.

Collections and reproductions of documents bearing upon performances at Court under Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth, with valuable indices and notes.

WELSFORD, ENID. *The Court Masque*. 1927.

SIMPSON, PERCY and BELL, C. F. *Designs by Inigo Jones for Masques and Plays at Court*. 1924.

The information contained in the former of these two may be supplemented by the admirable set of drawings of Masques, *décors* and costumes reproduced, with descriptions, in the latter.

BASKERVILL, C. R. *The Elizabethan Jig*. 1929.

BOAS, F. S. *University Drama in the Tudor Age*. 1914.

MOORE SMITH, G. C. *College Plays performed in the University of Cambridge*. 1923.

These monographs contain the information available upon important special aspects of the stage and drama. Much yet remains to be done in the field of the academic stage in the later part of the period.

GREG, W. W. *Henslowe's Diary*, and *Henslowe Papers*. 3 vols. 1904-8. Collections and reproductions, with commentary, of original documents from Dulwich College bearing upon Henslowe's theatrical transactions.

GREG, W. W. *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses*. 2 vols. 1931.

Reproductions, with exhaustive commentary, of all classes of surviving stage documents of the age of Shakespeare, such as 'platts', actors' parts, MS. plays and prompt copies.

GREG, W. W. *Elizabethan Literary Autographs*. 3 parts. 1925-32.

Part I of this work contains specimens of the handwriting of Elizabethan dramatists, with commentary, transcript, and brief biographies.

FURNIVALL, F. J. (editor). *Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles*. 1885-91.

LEE, SIR S. I. (editor). *Mr William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories and Tragedies*. 1623.

A collotype facsimile of the First Folio.

GREG, W. W. (editor). *Malone Society Reprints*. 1907 ff.

FARMER, J. S. (editor). *Tudor Facsimile Texts*. 1907-13.

In these sets of facsimile reproductions of printed and MS. plays, stage directions may be studied as found in the original texts of Elizabethan plays.

THORNDIKE, A. H. *Shakespeare's Theater*. 1916.

ADAMS, J. Q. *Shakespearean Playhouses*. 1917.

LAWRENCE, W. J. *The Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies*. Series 1 and 2, 1912 and 1913.

LAWRENCE, W. J. *Pre-Restoration Stage Studies*. 1927.

LAWRENCE, W. J. *The Physical Conditions of the Elizabethan Public Playhouse*. 1927.

The first two of these works are general studies of the history and structure of the theatres. Dr Lawrence, in his pioneer work, has collected and discussed the evidence upon a wide variety of problems of the stage.

MURRAY, J. T. *English Dramatic Companies, 1558-1642*. 2 vols. 1910.

HILLEBRAND, H. N. *The Child Actors*. 1926.

BALDWIN, T. W. *The Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company*. 1927.

NUNGEZER, EDWIN. *A Dictionary of Actors*. 1929.

These four books contain historical and biographical material concerning Elizabethan actors and theatrical companies.

### NOTE

No complete treatment of the history of the stage during the later Jacobean and Caroline ages has yet been written, Sir E. K. Chambers having fixed 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death, as terminating his study. Many of the books listed above, however, cover parts of this later period in special aspects. A still later period is dealt with in J. L. Hotson's *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* (1928).

Information is gradually being gathered to prepare the way for an exhaustive treatment of the post-Elizabethan age, as also to supplement what is known of Shakespeare's time. New knowledge is being gained piecemeal from the intensive study of literary and documentary sources, from State records and from records of courts of law.

Current views concerning the staging of plays may well be modified in time, and a number of problems remain for further consideration. We have, after all, to deal with the individual possibilities of a variety of theatres at different stages of a long period of development, in a hundred years of theatrical history.

The history of the companies, again, has left room for controversy, due to the instability of the organisation of most of them, with consequent splitting up, temporary coalitions and movements of groups from one company to another.

Very little is known concerning the inn-yard theatres of London, their methods of production and their history. And few indeed are the positive facts known about the immense field of the stage and drama in the provinces during the period.

Finally, we may yet hope for further information upon the lives and careers of dramatists, actors and organisers of the theatre of Shakespeare's time, if not of Shakespeare himself, upon whom diligence has been perhaps too exclusively concentrated in the past.

G. J. S.

## SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMATIC ART

In the list below I have noted books which I myself constantly consult. It makes no pretence, of course, to being comprehensive.

### EDITIONS OF THE PLAYS

The Furness 'Variorum', 23 vols. containing 21 plays and the poems, published at intervals since 1871. Each volume contains a large accumulation of textual notes and history and of critical extracts. But as this is eclectic rather than selective it needs using with judgment.

The 'Arden' edition, 1899-1924 (a play to a volume). A variety of editors; the value of their work also varying greatly, from excellence to mediocrity. But the scale, scope and format make it a good edition for the student.

Nine of the plays in separate volumes edited by Professor George Gordon, 1912. A suitable edition for the inexperienced but keen reader, with its trenchant and scholarly introductions and its explanatory notes.

The new Cambridge edition, 1921- a play a volume. Textually edited by Professor Dover Wilson and therefore of prime importance to the student. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has written introductions to the comedies considered as drama and literature.

BRADLEY, A. C.

*Shakespearean Tragedy*. 1904.

Studies of *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*.

BRADLEY, A. C.

*Oxford Lectures on Poetry*. 1917.

Contains a study of *Antony and Cleopatra*.

*Coriolanus*—the British Academy Shakespeare Lecture for 1912; republished in *A Miscellany*. 1929.

Analyses of the plays in the light of their chief characters, unsurpassed for sympathetic perception.

CHAMBERS, SIR E. K.

*The Elizabethan Stage*. 4 vols. 1923.

Chapters xvi-xxi, which deal with the theatres themselves and the staging, are indispensable to the student.

**CHAMBERS, SIR E. K.**

*William Shakespeare.* 2 vols. 1930.

This has taken its place as the most authoritative and fully documented statement of what is known of the man and the circumstances in which he worked; besides which, it summarises and evaluates the results of the scholarship devoted to the work itself.

**LAWRENCE, W. J.**

*The Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies.* Series I, 1912; Series II, 1913.

*Pre-Restoration Stage Studies.* 1927.

*The Physical Conditions of the Elizabethan Public Playhouse.* 1927.

*Shakespeare's Workshop.* 1928.

These, together with many still uncollected papers, are a storehouse of information and provocative argument about the practical conditions of the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage.

**MACKAIL, J. W.**

*The Approach to Shakespeare.* 1930.

The title describes the book; it shows the reader and spectator a road which should take him, if he will travel it sensitively, into the very heart of the plays and their beauty.

**MOULTON, RICHARD G.**

*Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist.* 1885. Third edition, revised and enlarged, 1906.

The pioneer work of a penetrating and powerful mind; particularly valuable for its elucidation of the scheme of a play and its characters.

**QUILLER-COUCH, SIR ARTHUR.**

*Shakespeare's Workmanship.* 1918.

A series of stimulating lectures upon the art of the plays; full of illuminating, if sometimes disputable, observation; admirably directed to their original purpose, which was to rouse an undergraduate audience to a lively interest in Shakespeare.

**RALEIGH, SIR WALTER.**

*Shakespeare.* 'English Men of Letters Series.' 1907.

A brilliant—or better, a radiant—and very individual appreciation of the plays and of what is known of the man. Not impeccable either in statement or judgment; but this is only the defect of its quality.

**STOLL, EDGAR ELMER.**

*Othello.* 1915.

*Hamlet.* 1919.

*Shakespeare Studies.* 1927.



STOLL, EDGAR ELMER.

*Poets and Playwrights.* 1930.

*The Tempest.* 1932.

*Art and Artifice in Shakespeare.* 1933.

'Objective' studies of the plays, seen more particularly in the light of contemporary literature and ideas. Valuable in themselves and as valuable as a corrective to the work of the 'mystic' school.

GRANVILLE-BARKER, HARLEY.

*Prefaces to Shakespeare, Series I, II and III.* 1927, 1930, 1937.

Detailed studies of (I) *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*; (II) *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Cymbeline*; (III) *Hamlet*—done from the point of view adopted in this chapter.

H. G.-B.

## SHAKESPEARE THE POET

WYNDHAM, GEORGE. *The Poems of Shakespeare.* Edited with an introduction and notes. 1898.

A useful and valuable edition. Some parts of the introduction may be thought too romantic by modern taste.

BEECHING, H. C. *The Sonnets of Shakespeare.* With an introduction and notes. 1904.

Sensible, illuminating, complete. An important suggestion is made as regards the abstract way of writing in some later sonnets.

KELLETT, E. E. *Suggestions.* Ch. iv. 1923.

Pursues Coleridge's observation of the evolution of Shakespeare's metaphors.

NOBLE, RICHMOND. *Shakespeare's Use of Song.* 1923.

A detailed study of the dramatic significance of the songs.

GORDON, G. S. *Shakespeare's English.* S.P.E. Tracts, No. xxix. 1928.

This all too brief pamphlet is essential for the understanding of the vocabulary.

BLUNDEN, EDMUND. *Shakespeare's Significances.* 1929.

A poet reveals the concealed meanings, the hints and overtones in *King Lear*.

RYLANDS, GEORGE H. W. *Words and Poetry*. 1930. Part II may serve to supplement some paragraphs in this chapter.

RYLANDS, GEORGE H. W. *English Poetry and The Abstract Word*. English Association Studies, vol. XVI. 1930.

SPURGEON, CAROLINE F. E. *Leading Motives in the Imagery of Shakespeare's Tragedies*. 1930.

SPURGEON, CAROLINE F. E. *Shakespeare's Iterative Imagery*. British Academy, vol. XVII. 1931.

The first results of Miss Spurgeon's classification of all the images; similar to the work of Mr Wilson Knight but independent of it and extremely interesting.

MURRY, JOHN MIDDLETON. *Shakespeare's 'Dedication'*. 'Countries of the Mind.' Second series. 1931.

KNIGHT, G. WILSON. *The Wheel of Fire*. 1930.

A new interpretation of Shakespeare based upon a study of the imagery. This idea of the poetic symbolism of Shakespeare is pursued farther (perhaps too far) by the same author in *The Imperial Theme*, 1931, and *The Shakespearean Tempest*, 1932.

G. R.

## SHAKESPEARE'S VOCABULARY

BRADLEY, HENRY. *Shakespeare's English*. 'Shakespeare's England.' Vol. II, ch. XXX. 1917.

Remains the most compendious and generally useful review of the Shakespearian form of Elizabethan English. Opinion on some points of phonology has, however, been modified since 1917 and no phonetic notation is used.

WYLD, H. C. *A History of Modern Colloquial English*. Ch. IV. 1921.

Traces the process of standardisation and stresses the courtly side of 'good' English (written and spoken) in the late Elizabethan period.

BOARD OF EDUCATION. *The Teaching of English in England*. 1921.

Ch. II deals with the subject historically and illustrates very cogently and succinctly the neglect of English studies in Tudor schools.

GORDON, G. S. *Shakespeare's English*. S.P.E. Tracts, No. XXIX. 1928.

Stresses freedom of Elizabethan speech. Full and vivid illustration of 'language-making' in Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

McKNIGHT, G. H. *Modern English in the Making*. 1928.

Chs. vi to xi inclusive offer a stimulating and admirably illustrated account of the influences at work in Elizabethan English.

WILLCOCK, G. D. *Shakespeare as a Critic of Language*. Shakespeare Association Lecture. 1935.

G. D. W.

## SHAKESPEARE AND MUSIC

CHAPPELL, W. *Old English Popular Music*. Revised by H. E. Wool-droge. 2 vols. 1893.

BOND, R. WARWICK. *The Works of John Lyly*. 1902.

LAWRENCE, W. J. *The Elizabethan Playhouse and other studies*. 1912.

COWLING, G. H. *Music on the Shakespearean Stage*. 1913.

Information on music in pre-Shakespearian Drama and on the practical details of the Elizabethan stage.

ARKWRIGHT, G. E. P. 'Elizabethan Choirboy Plays and their Music.' *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 1914.

SCHOLES, P. A. 'The purpose behind Shakespeare's use of music.' *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 1917.

BRIDGE, J. F. *Shakespearean Music in the Plays and early Operas*. 1923.

NOBLE, RICHMOND. *Shakespeare's Use of Song*. 1923.

DENT, E. J. *Foundations of English Opera*. 1928.

NAYLOR, E. W. *Shakespeare Music*. 1928.

A useful collection of songs and instrumental pieces of Shakespeare's time arranged for use in the performance of the plays.

BASKERVILL, C. R. *The Elizabethan Jig*. 1929.

A full account of the jig, with the texts, in whole or part, of thirty-five of them.

NAYLOR, E. W. *Shakespeare and Music*. 1931.

The best guide to Shakespearian music and to the musical allusions in Shakespeare's poems and plays.

GALPIN, F. W. *Old English Instruments of Music*. 1932.

GIBBON, JOHN MURRAY. *Melody and the Lyric*.

Covers wider ground, but contains many specimens of the songs and dances available for the Elizabethan Drama.

E. J. D.

## THE NATIONAL BACKGROUND

STOW, J. *Annales, or a General Chronicle of England*. First printed in 1592; continued by others to 1631.

A most important contemporary record of events of all kinds.

CAMDEN, WILLIAM. *The History... of Elizabeth, late Queen of England*. 1615 (Latin), 1631 (English).

An excellent history of the reign by one who had access to first-hand information.

WINWOOD, SIR R. *Memorials of Affairs of State in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James*. 3 vols. 1725.

A large collection of letters and state documents which came into the hands of Sir Ralph Winwood, for many years English ambassador in France.

STRYPE, J. *Annals of the Reformation*. 1709-31.

STRYPE, J. *Life of Archbishop Whitgift*. 1718.

An important collection of papers, chiefly concerned with ecclesiastical matters.

COLLINS, A. *Letters and memorials of State... from the originals at Penshurst Place*. 1746.

Include many news-letters written from Court to Sir Robert Sidney. Sometimes known as the *Sidney Papers*.

BIRCH, T. *Memoirs of the reign of Queen Elizabeth*. 2 vols. 1754.

Extracts from the correspondence of Anthony Bacon, private secretary to the Earl of Essex.

NICHOLS, J. *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*. 2 vols. 1788; new ed. 3 vols. 1823.

NICHOLS, J. *Progresses, Processions and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First*. 4 vols. 1828.

Reprints of records and contemporary accounts of Court ceremonies. Most useful and illuminating, especially the *Progresses of King James*.

HARINGTON, SIR JOHN. *Nugae Antiquae*. Edited by T. Park. 1804.

Includes many of Harington's letters.

CHAMBERLAIN, J. *Letters... during the reign of Queen Elizabeth*. Edited by Sarah Williams. 1861.

Contemporary letters of gossip, 1597-1603. Later letters of Chamberlain are to be found in Winwood's *Memorials* and Birch's *James I*.

SPEDDING, J. *The Life and Letters of Francis Bacon*. 1861.

Particularly valuable for the Essex affair, but touching public life at all points.

GARDINER, S. R. *History of England, 1603-1642*. Vols. 1 and 2. 1893 (revised).

An admirable guide to the history of the reign of James I.

HAWARDE, W. *Les Reportes del Cases in Camera Stellata, 1593-1609*.

Edited by W. P. Baildon. 1894.

A barrister's notes of Star Chamber cases.

DASENT, J. R. *Acts of the Privy Council, 1900 etc.*

The minutes and letter-books of the Council.

CHEYNEY, E. P. *A History of England from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth*. 1913, 1926.

A full history of these years, with chapters on such subjects as the law courts, administration, parliament, local government.

HARRISON, G. B. *An Elizabethan Journal, 1591-1594*. 1928.

HARRISON, G. B. *A Second Elizabethan Journal, 1595-1598*. 1931.

HARRISON, G. B. *A Last Elizabethan Journal, 1599-1603*. 1933.

A day by day account of the things most discussed.

NEALE, J. E. *Queen Elizabeth*. 1934.

*Calendars of State Papers Domestic*.

*Calendars of State Papers. Relating to Ireland*.

Abstracts and summaries of documents of all kinds preserved in the Public Record Office, London.

*Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury preserved at Hatfield House*.

Abstracts and summaries of the many papers collected by Lord Burghley and his son Robert Cecil, afterwards Earl of Salisbury.

G. B. H.

## THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

### I. MODERN WORKS

RALEIGH, SIR W. *Shakespeare's England*. 2 vols. 1916.

BYRNE, M. ST CLARE. *Elizabethan Life in Town and Country*. Second edition, 1933.

Both essential for *general study* of social life; special reference should be made to their bibliographies.

WILSON, J. DOVER. *Life in Shakespeare's England*. 1911.

Selections from contemporary material, mostly literary.

BYRNE, M. ST CLARE. *The Elizabethan Home*. Second edition, 1930.

Selections from the conversation manuals of Hollyband and Eron-delle: invaluable for their pictures of domestic life in both noble and citizen households.

HARRISON, G. B. *England in Shakespeare's Day*. 1928. 'English Life in English Literature Series.' No. 3.

## II. CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTS, LETTERS, ETC.

The correspondence between Lady Honor Lisle and others, calendared and largely transcribed in *Calendar of State Papers; Henry VIII*; 1537-1539. Some of these letters have been printed by M. A. E. Wood in vols. II and III of *Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies*, 1846. These, however, should be read under reference to their originals.

*A List of the Marquis of Exeter's Servants*. P.R.O. (S.P.I. 138).

For a shortened and not entirely accurate transcript see *Calendar of State Papers: Henry VIII*: 1538, vol. II, p. 755.

*A Booke of Orders and Rules of Anthony Viscount Montague in 1595*. *Sussex Archaeological Collections*. Vol. VII. 1854.

*The Earl of Northumberland's Household Book*. Ed. Bishop Percy.

*Ordinances for the Royal Household from Edward III to William and Mary*. Ed. Nicholas Carlisle, for the Society of Antiquaries. 1829.

The items of most use in the present connexion are: (1) *Articles Ordained by King Henry VII for the Regulation of his Household*. (2) *Ordinances for the Household made at Eltham*, 1526. (3) *Queen Elizabeth's Annual Expense, Civil and Military*. (4) *The Booke of Household of Queen Elizabeth in the 43rd year of her reign*. (5) *Ordinances of the Household of King James I*, 1604. (6) *The Establishment of Prince Henry*, 1610.

Letters, accounts, inventories, etc. calendared in Publications of the *Historical Manuscripts Commission*.

HARRISON, WILLIAM. *Description of England*, 1587. Ed. Furnivall for New Shakspeare Society. *Selections from: Elizabethan England*; ed. L. Withington: Scott Library.

- RYE, W. B. *England as Seen by Foreigners*. Contemporary opinions, collected and edited, 1865.
- NICHOLS, J. *Progresses . . . of Queen Elizabeth*. 2 vols. 1788; new ed. 3 vols. 1823.
- See also sources cited in footnotes.

M. ST C. B.

## SHAKESPEARE'S SOURCES

- FARMER, RICHARD. *An Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare*. 1767. Reprinted in vol. 1 of the Boswell-Malone Variorum Edition of the Works. 1821.
- A discussion of the extent of Shakespeare's reading, especially of Greek and Latin authors.
- MALONE, E. *Dissertation of Henry VI*. Printed in vol. xviii of the Boswell-Malone Variorum Edition.
- The first detailed discussion of the authenticity of the three parts of *Henry VI*.
- HAZLITT, W. C. (editor). *Shakespeare's Library*. Second edition, 1875.
- The most complete collection of the 'plays romances novels poems and histories employed by Shakespeare in the composition of his works'.
- FLEAY, F. G. *Shakespeare Manual*. 1876.
- FLEAY, F. G. *Life and Work of Shakespeare*. 1886.
- Fleay can be counted as the first 'disintegrator', but his evidence and his conclusions should be carefully tested in the light of recent research.
- SKEAT, W. W. *Shakespeare's Plutarch*. 1892.
- Contains North's translation of Plutarch's Lives of Coriolanus, Julius Cæsar, Brutus, Antony, Octavius, and extracts from the Lives of Theseus and Alcibiades. There is also an edition of the Lives of Coriolanus, Julius Caesar, Brutus and Antony, edited by R. H. Carr (1906). In both these books the marginal captions are printed.
- BOSWELL-STONE, W. G. *Shakespeare's Holinshed*. 1896. Reprinted in I. Gollancz, *The Shakespeare Classics*. 1907.
- A book of relevant extracts from the Chronicles, arranged with editorial comment under the headings of the different plays. There is also an edition of the Chronicles for the reigns of Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V, edited by R. S. Wallace and A. Hansen (1923). In both these books the marginal captions are printed.

BOAS, F. S. *The Works of Thomas Kyd*. 1901.

Kyd's claim to the authorship of the *Ur-Hamlet* is discussed in the introduction. See also R. B. McKerrow, *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, vol. iv (1908), pp. 449-52.

GOLLANCZ, I. (editor). *The Shakespeare Classics*. 1903-13.

This series of reprints includes *Rosalynde*, *Pandosto*, *Apollonius and Sylla*, *Romeus and Juliet*, Plautus' *Menaechmi*, *The Taming of A Shrew*, *The Troublesome Raigne*, *King Leir*, and two volumes of those parts of North's Plutarch which Shakespeare used.

GREG, W. W. *Henslowe's Diary*. Vol. i, *The Text*; Vol. ii, *The Commentary*. 1904, 1907.

The most valuable document for the study of the problems of collaboration and revision.

ANDERS, H. R. D. *Shakespeare's Books*. 1904.

Intended to serve as an introduction to a new edition of Hazlitt's *Shakespeare's Library*, contemplated by the Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft; it contains much useful matter suggesting the extent and variety of Shakespeare's reading.

MACGALLUM, A. W. *Shakespeare's Roman Plays and their Background*. 1910, reprinted 1925.

The most detailed study of Shakespeare's use of Plutarch, but see also G. Wyndham, *Essays in Romantic Literature* (1919).

STOLL, E. E. *Hamlet, An Historical and Comparative Study*. 1919.

ROBERTSON, J. M. *The Problem of Hamlet*. 1919.

BROCK, A. CLUTTON. *Shakespeare's Hamlet*. 1922.

WALDOCK, A. J. *Hamlet*. 1931.

These four books illustrate the way in which aesthetic criticism of this play has been affected by the theory that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was 'superposed upon much cruder material which persists even in the final form' [T. S. Eliot, *Hamlet and His Problems*, in *Selected Essays* (1932)].

WILSON, J. DOVER (editor with SIR A. QUILLER-ROUCH). *The New Shakespeare*. 1921 - .

Prof. Dover Wilson's theories, methods and conclusions can best be studied in the notes, especially the 'Note on the Copy', to the plays published in this edition.

CHAMBERS, SIR E. K. *The Elizabethan Stage*. 4 vols. 1923.



CHAMBERS, SIR E. K. *William Shakespeare*. 2 vols. 1930.

Indispensable for reference on all the points raised in this chapter. Ch. vii of *William Shakespeare*, 'The Problem of Authenticity', is the fullest judicial treatment of the problems of revision and collaboration and of the theories of the disintegrators. See also the same author's British Academy Lecture, *The Disintegration of Shakespeare* (1924, reprinted in *Aspects of Shakespeare*, 1932).

POLLARD, A. W. (and others). *Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of 'Sir Thomas More.'* 1923.

An important study of an existing playhouse manuscript, which shows obvious signs of both revision and collaboration.

GAW, A. *The Origin and Development of 1 Henry VI.* 1926.

The fullest treatment of the problem of the authorship of this play, but its conclusions are affected by the theory put forward by P. Alexander.

CHAMBRUN, C. L. de. *Shakespeare, Actor Poet.* 1927.

An argument that Shakespeare was strongly influenced by Montaigne through Florio.

ALEXANDER, P. *Shakespeare's Henry VI and Richard III.* 1929.

A convincing argument that the two parts of the Contention are examples of 'bad quartos'.

ROBERTSON, J. M. *The Genuine in Shakespeare, A Conspectus.* 1930.

Robertson's summary of the conclusions of his investigations; his methods, however, do not lend themselves to summary treatment. They can be studied at greater length in the five volumes of his *The Shakespeare Canon* (1922-32) and in *Literary Detection, A Symposium on Macbeth* (1931).

A. L. A.

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LAMB, CHARLES. *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived about the time of Shakespeare.* 1808.

THORNDIKE, ASHLEY H. *The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare.* 1901.

GAYLEY, CHARLES MILLS. *Representative English Comedies.* 1903.  
Introduction. (For the Shakespearian Comedies.)

SWINBURNE, A. C. *The Age of Shakespeare.* 1908.

- THORNDIKE, ASHLEY H. *The Facts about Shakespeare*. 1913.
- GAYLEY, CHARLES MILLS. *Francis Beaumont, Dramatist*. 1914.
- SWINBURNE, A. C. *Contemporaries of Shakespeare*. 1919.
- LUCAS, F. L. *The Works of John Webster*. 4 vols. 1927. Introduction in vol. 1.
- SYKES, H. DUGDALE. *Sidelights on Elizabethan Drama*. 1928.
- SISSON, CHARLES J. *The Elizabethan Dramatists, except Shakespeare*. 1928.
- BOAS, F. S. *Christopher Marlowe; A biographical and critical study*. 1940.
- CLARK, ARTHUR MELVILLE. *Thomas Heywood*. 1931.
- ELIOT, T. S. *Selected Essays*. 1932.
- BOAS, F. S. *An Introduction to Tudor Drama*. 1933.

B. D.

## SHAKESPEARE'S TEXT

*The Cambridge Shakespeare*. First Edition, edited by J. GLOVER, W. G. CLARK, and W. ALDIS WRIGHT. 1863-6. Second and third editions, edited by W. ALDIS WRIGHT. 1867 and 1891.

The first edition marked a great advance over previous work both in the soundness of its text and the full, though not complete, collations. It is generally preferred to the later editions.

## Facsimiles of the First Folio.

*Shakespeare as put forth in 1623*. A reprint of Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies published according to the True Originall Copies. London, printed by Isaac Iaggard and Ed. Blount, 1623, and reprinted for Lionel Booth, 1864.

A marvellously accurate 'type-facsimile'. Cheaper and handier to work with than the Oxford collotype facsimile of 1902 or the photo-zincographic one of Messrs Methuen (1910), though it cannot, like these, be used for detective work such as that of Mr E. E. Willoughby, on *The Printing of the First Folio* (1932). All three facsimiles are out of print. Facsimiles of the Folio text of ten plays, with a note and collations by J. Dover Wilson, have been published by Messrs Faber and Faber.

*Shakspeare Quarto Facsimiles.* Executed under the superintendence of F. J. Furnivall. 43 vols. 1885-91.

The facsimiles in photozincography by C. Practorius, and photolithography by W. Griggs are not entirely trustworthy, owing to careless retouchings; but they remain indispensable for advanced students, more especially those with introductions by P. A. Daniel.

POLLARD, A. W. *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos: a study in the bibliography of Shakespeare's plays*, 1594-1685. With 37 illustrations. 1909. Popularised the distinction between 'Good' and 'Bad' quartos.

POLLARD, A. W. *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates and the problems of the transmission of his text.*

The Sanders Lectures on Bibliography, 1915; first printed in *The Library*; published by Alex. Moring, 1916; Second edition, revised with an introduction (Cambridge University Press). 1920.

THOMPSON, SIR E. MAUNDE. *Shakespeare's Handwriting; a Study.* 1916. The first expert examination of the handwriting of the 'More' Fragment with full-sized facsimiles.

WILSON, J. DOVER. Textual Introductions to *The Tempest* and other volumes of 'The New Shakespeare'. 1921, etc.

CHAMBERS, SIR E. K. *The Elizabethan Stage.* 4 vols. 1923.

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GREG, W. W. *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements; 'The Battle of Alcazar' & 'Orlando Furioso'; an essay in critical bibliography.* 1923.

Argument for bad text having arisen from memorial reconstruction rather than shorthand notes.

POLLARD, A. W. *The Foundations of Shakespeare's Text.* Annual Shakespeare Lecture of the British Academy. 1923.

Reprinted in *Aspects of Shakespeare.* 1933.

*Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of 'Sir Thomas More'.* Papers by ALFRED W. POLLARD, W. W. GREG, SIR E. MAUNDE THOMPSON, J. DOVER WILSON and R. W. CHAMBERS, with the text of the Ill May Day Scenes edited by W. W. GREG. 1923.

CROMPTON RHODES, R. *Shakespeare's First Folio; a study.* 1923.

Includes chapters on The Company of Stationers; The 'Pavier' Shakespeare [i.e. the volume of 1619]; The Unblotted Papers; and 'Divers stolne and Surreptitious Copies'.

*Studies in the First Folio.* Written for the Shakespeare Association in celebration of the First Folio tercentenary. 1924.

The introduction by Sir Israel Gollancz and papers by J. Dover Wilson on 'The Task of Heminge and Condell'; by R. Crompton Rhodes on 'The First Folio and the Elizabethan Stage'; by W. W. Greg on 'The First Folio and its Publishers'; and by Allardyce Nicoll on 'The Editors of Shakespeare from First Folio to Malone', are all of value for the text.

McKerrow, R. B. *An introduction to Bibliography for literary students.* 1927.

Part I discusses the make up of books; part II, bibliographical evidence as to order of editions and date; copy, proofs, proof-corrections and cancels; part III, treatment of copy by compositors.

Tannenbaum, S. A. *The Booke of 'Sir Thomas Moore'; a bibliotic study.* 1927.

Arguments against Shakespeare's authorship of the 'three pages'.

Greg, W. W. *Principles of Emendation in Shakespeare.* Annual Shakespeare Lecture of the British Academy. 1928.

Reprinted in *Aspects of Shakespeare.* 1933.

Chambers, Sir E. K. *William Shakespeare; a study of facts and problems.* 2 vols. 1930.

Vol. I, ch. iv, pp. 92-125, The Book of the Play; ch. v, pp. 126-167, The Quartos and the First Folio; ch. vi, pp. 168-204, Plays in the Printing House; ch. ix, pp. 275, 498, Plays of the First Folio; ch. x, pp. 499-515, Plays Outside the First Folio. I. Sir Thomas More.

Chambers, R. W. 'Some Sequences of Thought in Shakespeare and in the 147 lines of "Sir Thomas More".' *The Modern Language Review*, vol. XXVI, No. 3, pp. 251-30. July, 1931.

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- SMITH, D. N. *Eighteenth-Century Essays on Shakespeare*. 1903.  
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- WARNER, B. *Famous Introductions to Shakespeare's Plays*. 1906.  
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- ROBERTSON, J. G. 'Shakespeare on the Continent.' *C.H.E.L.* vol. v. 1910.  
A masterly sketch by an expert in comparative literature of Shakespeare's reception and influence in Europe.
- BALDENSPERGER, F. *Esquisse d'une histoire de Shakespeare en France*. 1910.  
An intelligent essay on the history of literary taste in France.
- GUNDOLF, F. *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist*. 1911.  
A brilliant survey of German intellectual history as affected by Shakespeare.
- HIRONDELLE, A. *Shakespeare en Russie*. 1912.
- SMITH, D. N. *Shakespeare Criticism*. 1916.  
A useful selection of criticism during several centuries.
- HERFORD, C. H. *A Sketch of recent Shakespearean Investigations*. 1923.  
A packed and philosophical survey of Shakespearian criticism from 1893 to 1923.
- YOUNG, KARL. *Samuel Johnson on Shakespeare*. 1924.  
A well-informed and carefully ordered account of the eighteenth-century concern with the reality of characters.
- STOLL, E. E. *Shakespeare Studies, historical and comparative in method*. 1927.
- BABCOCK, R. W. *The Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry*. 1931.  
A valuable account of the growth of the enthusiasm for Shakespeare during the eighteenth century.

RALLI, A. *A History of Shakespeare Criticism*. 2 vols. 1932.

Useful for its summaries of criticism—but does not give the picture of the evolution of criticism its title would lead one to expect. (See a pertinent and severe criticism by L. L. Schucking, *Beiblatt zur Anglia*, April, 1933.)

J. I.

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FURNIVALL, F. J. Preface to the Leopold Shakespeare. 1877.

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SMITH, D. N. *Eighteenth-Century Essays on Shakespeare*. 1903.

Gives much material indispensable in estimating the work of early editors.

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A further selection of editorial matter.

LOUNSBURY, T. R. *The Text of Shakespeare*. 1906.

A detailed and valuable account of the work of early editors.

HERFORD, C. H. *A sketch of recent Shakespearean Investigations*. 1923.

A very useful summary of scholarship from 1893 to 1923.

SIMPSON, P. *The Bibliographical Study of Shakespeare*. Oxford Bibliographical Society, vol. 1, part 1. 1923.

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GREG, W. W. *Principles of Emendation in Shakespeare*. 1928.

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SMITH, D. N. *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*. 1928.

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JACKSON, A. 'Rowe's Edition of Shakespeare.' *The Library*. 1930.

A useful bibliographical account of Rowe's edition and a concise statement of his achievement.

BABCOCK, R. W. *The Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry, 1766-1799*. 1931.

Includes a detailed survey of the growth of Shakespeare scholarship in the second half of the eighteenth century.

McKerrow, R. B. *The treatment of Shakespeare's Text by his earlier editors, 1709-1768.* 1933.

A careful and fresh stocktaking of eighteenth-century editorial activity—by the editor of the forthcoming Oxford Variorum text.

J. I.

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A record, compiled from play-bills and other sources, of the productions at the London theatres and some others, with criticisms and commentaries.

Stephen, Leslie and Lee, Sir Sidney. *Dictionary of National Biography.* 1885, etc. (in progress).

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Irving, Sir Henry and Marshall, Frank A. *The Works of William Shakespeare.* Second edition. 1906.

Commonly called The Henry Irving Shakespeare. Contains a stage history of each play.

Odell, George C. D. *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving.* 2 vols. 1921.

A history of the adaptation and staging of Shakespeare. A useful introduction to the study of the subject.

Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur and Wilson, J. Dover. *The New Shakespeare.* 1921, etc. (in progress).

Each volume includes a stage history of the play to which it is devoted.

Summers, Montague. *Shakespeare Adaptations.* 1922.

Gives the texts of *The Tempest or the Enchanted Island* by D'Avenant and Dryden; *The Mock-Tempest or the Enchanted Castle*, by T. Duffett, and *The History of King Lear* in the version by Nahum Tate, with a long introduction and notes.

Nicoll, Allardyce. *Dryden as an Adapter of Shakespeare.* 1922.

A Shakespeare Association pamphlet of great value.

Nicoll, Allardyce. *A History of Restoration Drama 1660-1700.* 1923.

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NICOLL, ALLARDYCE. *A History of Early Nineteenth Century Drama 1800-1850.* 1930.

A comprehensive and well-documented account of the subject, in which the history of Shakespeare on the stage is seen in its relation to the drama as a whole.

NICOLL, ALLARDYCE. *The Development of the Theatre.* 1927.

Contains some useful notes on staging and costume, with many illustrations.

SPENCER, HAZELTON. *Shakespeare Improved; the Restoration Versions in Quarto and on the Stage.* 1927.

The title sufficiently describes the scholarly work of research, which is invaluable to the student.

HOTSON, LESLIE. *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage.* 1928.

Another work of original research, useful as giving the theatrical background, but not greatly concerned with Shakespeare.

[DOWNES, JOHN.] *Roscius Anglicanus.* Ed. by Montague Summers. 1928.

An Historical Review of the Stage from 1660 to 1706, written by the Book-keeper and Prompter of the Duke's Company. First published in 1708. Mr Summer's edition has many pages of explanatory notes.

Collections of play-bills, newspapers and prints: especially the Burney Collection of prints in the British Museum, and the Gabrielle Enthoven Collection of play-bills and other documents in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

H.C.



# **APPENDICES**

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## APPENDIX II

### A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

THE following chronological table covering Shakespeare's working years shows (a) some important national and theatrical events; (b) the date of publication of some important books; (c) approximate date of the first production of the most important plays during Shakespeare's career; (d) the dates of their first publication. The evidence for (c) and (d) will be found principally in Sir E. K. Chambers's *Elizabethan Stage* and *William Shakespeare: a study of facts and problems*. It is seldom possible to date the first appearance of a play exactly: before 1595 and after 1605 the margin of error may be as much as five years. Nor is there general agreement on the dates of Shakespeare's earliest and latest plays: some scholars would date the first as early as 1587. Plays which may be dated with some precision are marked ‡.

## EVENTS

## BOOKS PUBLISHED

1587	Execution of Mary Queen of Scots Funeral of Sir Philip Sidney	
1588	Defeat of the Spanish Armada Robert, Earl of Leicester, died	Greene's <i>Perimedes</i>
1589	A Parliament held The Portugal Voyage Duke of Guise and Henri III murdered Civil war in France	Hakluyt's <i>Voyages</i> Greene's <i>Pandosto</i> and <i>Menaphon</i>
1590	Sir Francis Walsingham died	Lodge's <i>Rosalynde</i> Spenser's <i>Faerie Queene</i> , Bks 1-3 Marprelate controversy
1591	Hacket's treason The loss of the 'Revenge' Proclamation against Jesuits and seminaries	Harington's <i>Orlando Furioso</i> Sidney's <i>Astrophel and Stella</i> Spenser's <i>Complaints</i>
1592	Scottish Witchcraft trials Greene died The Great Carrack captured Edward Alleyn marries Hens- lowe's step-daughter	Greene's <i>The Conny-catching pam- phlets: Groatworth of Wit</i> Nashe's <i>Piers Penniless</i> Constable's <i>Diana</i> Chettle's <i>Kind Hart's Dream</i>
1593	Parliament held Marlowe killed Plague stops playing	VENUS AND ADONIS Dravton's <i>Idea</i> Daniel's <i>Delia</i> Chapman's <i>Shadow of Night: The Phoenix Nest</i> Hooker's <i>Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity</i>
1594	Plague till summer Playing reorganised: the Admiral's Men at Rose; Chamberlain's at Theatre Kyd died	LUCRECE <i>Willobie his Arisa</i> Nashe's <i>Jack Wiltton</i>

PLAYS FIRST PRODUCED	PLAYS PUBLISHED
<i>I Tamburlaine</i> <i>Alphonsus of Aragon</i> <i>Galathea</i>	
<i>Endimion</i> <i>II Tamburlaine</i>	
<i>Spanish Tragedy</i> <i>Jew of Malta</i> <i>Friar Bacon</i> <i>Midas</i> <i>Mother Bombie</i>	<i>Rare triumphs of Love and Fortune</i>
<i>Looking Glass for London</i> <i>Love's Metamorphosis</i>	<i>Three Lords and three Ladies of London</i> <i>I and II Tamburlaine</i>
<i>Orlando Furioso</i> <i>James IV</i> <i>The Woman in the Moon</i>	<i>Endimion</i> <i>I and II Troublesome reign of King John</i>
<i>Dr Faustus</i> <i>Edward II</i> <i>I, II, III Henry VI</i> <i>RICHARD III</i> <i>TITUS ANDRONICUS</i>	<i>Arden of Faversham</i> <i>Spanish Tragedy</i> <i>Galathea</i> <i>Midas</i>
<i>Massacre at Paris</i> <i>Dido, Queen of Carthage</i> <i>TAMING OF THE SHREW</i> <i>COMEDY OF ERRORS</i> <i>TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA</i> <i>LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST</i>	<i>Edward II</i> <i>Edward I</i>
<i>John a Kent</i> <i>ROMEO AND JULIET</i>	<i>Orlando Furioso*</i> <i>Knack to know a Knave</i> <i>TITUS ANDRONICUS</i> <i>Looking Glass for London</i> <i>I Contention York and Lancaster</i> <i>Taming of a Shrew</i> <i>Pedlar's Prophecy</i> <i>Famous Victories of Henry V</i> <i>James IV</i> <i>Friar Bacon</i> <i>King Leir</i> <i>David and Bethsabe</i> <i>Jew of Malta</i> <i>Wounds of Civil War</i>

\* The probable explanation of the sudden increase in printed plays in 1594 is that the companies were so disorganised by the plague that they raised money by selling their MSS.

EVENTS	BOOKS PUBLISHED
1594 ( <i>cont.</i> )	
1595 Riots in London Raleigh's Guiana Voyage Last expedition of Drake and Hawkins (both died)	Spenser's <i>Amoretti</i> Sidney's <i>Defence of Poesy</i> Southwell's <i>St Peter's Complaint</i>
1596 Calais captured by Spaniards The Cadiz expedition	Harington's <i>Metamorphosis of Ajax</i> Lodge's <i>Wit's Miserie</i> Spenser's <i>Faerie Queene</i> , Bks 4-6; <i>Four Hymns</i> Drayton's <i>Mortimeriados</i> Davies's <i>Orchestra</i>
1597 The Islands Voyage A Spanish armada wrecked A Parliament held	Bacon's <i>Essays</i> (1st version) Hall's <i>Virgudemiarum</i> Deloney's <i>Jack of Newbury</i> and <i>Gentle Craft</i>
1598 Rebellion and disaster in Ireland The Queen boxes Essex's ears Lord Burghley died Philip II of Spain died The 'Theatre' demolished	Marlowe's <i>Hero and Leander</i> Chapman's Trans. of <i>Iliad</i> (7 books) Meres's <i>Palladis Tamia</i> Marston's <i>Scourge of Villainy</i>
1599 Spenser died Essex in Ireland Satires burnt Chamberlain's Men occupy new 'Globe' Invasion scare Essex fails in Ireland and returns in disgrace Children of Paul's begin playing	Hayward's <i>Henry IV</i> THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM Davies's <i>Nosce teipsum</i>
1600 Mountjoy in Ireland Kempe's dance to Norwich Alleyn builds 'Fortune' theatre	<i>England's Helicon</i> Exorcism controversy

## PLAYS FIRST PRODUCED

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM  
RICHARD II

*Blind Beggar of Alexandria* ‡  
KING JOHN  
MERCHANT OF VENICE

*Humorous Day's Mirth* ‡  
*Isle of Dogs* (lost) ‡  
*The Case is altered*  
I HENRY IV

*I and II Robert, Earl of Huntingdon*  
*Englishmen for my money*  
*Every Man in his Humour* ‡  
*Two Angry women of Abingdon*  
*Pilgrimage to Parnassus* ‡  
II HENRY IV  
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

*Shoemaker's Holiday* ‡  
*Every Man out of his Humour*  
*I Sir John Oldcastle* ‡  
*Histrionmastix*  
*Antonio and Mellida*  
*Antonio's Revenge*  
*The Old Law*  
*Old Fortunatus* ‡  
*I Return from Parnassus* ‡  
HENRY V ‡  
AS YOU LIKE IT  
JULIUS CAESAR ‡

*Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green* ‡  
*Patient Grissell* ‡  
MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

## PLAYS PUBLISHED

*Cobbler's prophecy*  
*Four Prentices of London*  
*True Tragedy of Richard III*  
*Lochrine*  
*Fair Em*  
*Battle of Alcazar*  
*Selimus*  
*Dido, Queen of Carthage*  
  
*George a Greene*  
*Old Wives' Tale*  
*Woman in the Moon*  
*Knack to know an honest man*  
*Edward III*  
*True tragedy of Richard Duke of York*

RICHARD II  
RICHARD III  
ROMEO AND JULIET

I HENRY IV  
MERCHANT OF VENICE  
*Blind Beggar of Alexandria*  
LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST  
*Mucedorus*

*I and II Edward IV*  
*Warning for fair women*  
*Humorous day's mirth*  
*Two angry women of Abingdon*  
*Alphonsus of Aragon*

*Old Fortunatus*  
*Patient Grissell*  
*Every man out of his humour*

EVENTS	BOOKS PUBLISHED
<b>1600</b> The Gowry conspiracy <i>(cont.)</i> Children of Chapel begin playing at Blackfriars East India Company formed	
<b>1601</b> Essex's rebellion and execution The 'War of the Theatres' Siege of Ostend begun Spanish expedition lands in Ireland A Parliament held: the agitation concerning monopolies	Catholic controversy Holland's Translation of Pliny
<b>1602</b> Tyrone defeated in Ireland Spaniards surrender Biron's conspiracy	Campion's <i>Observations on Art of          English Poetry</i> Deloney's <i>Thomas of Reading</i>
<b>1603</b> Tyrone submits QUEEN ELIZABETH DIED ACCESSION OF JAMES I Chamberlain's Men become King's Men Plague stops playing Raleigh and others tried and con- demned Renewed vogue of Court masques	Davies's <i>Microcosmos</i> Dekker's <i>Wonderful Year</i> Daniel's <i>Defence of Rhyme</i> Florio's Translation of Montaigne's <i>Essays</i> James I's <i>Demonology</i> (London ed.)
<b>1604</b> Hampton Court Conference End of Siege of Ostend James's first parliament Peace with Spain	
<b>1605</b> Act to expel Jesuits and seminary priests	Bacon's <i>Advancement of Learning</i>



## PLAYS FIRST PRODUCED

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

*Cynthia's Revels*  
*Poetaster*  
*Satromastix*  
*Blurt Master Constable*  
*What You Will* \*  
*II Return from Parnassus*  
 HAMLET

*Gentleman Usher*  
*Sir Thomas Wyatt* †  
 TWELFTH NIGHT †

*Woman Killed with Kindness* ‡  
*Hoffman*  
*Sejanus*  
*The Phoenix*

*Dutch Courtesan*  
*All Fools*  
*Malcontent*  
*Wise Woman of Hogsdon*  
*Monsieur D'Olive*  
*Law Tricks*  
*Bussy D'Ambois*  
*I and II Honest Whore*  
*Westward Hoe*  
*ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL*  
*MEASURE FOR MEASURE*  
 OTHELLO

*The Fawn*  
*Eastward Hoe* ‡  
*Northward Hoe*

## PLAYS PUBLISHED

*Alarum for London*  
*Maid's Metamorphosis*  
 HENRY V  
 MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING  
*I and II Sir John Oldcastle*  
 II HENRY IV  
*Jack Drum's Entertainment*  
 MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

*Love's Metamorphosis*  
*I and II Robert, Earl of Huntingdon*  
*Shoemaker's Holiday*  
*Dr Faustus*  
*Cynthia's Revels*  
*Every Man in his Humour* (1st version)

*Antonio and Mellida*  
*Antonio's Revenge*  
*Satromastix*  
*Poetaster*  
 MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR  
*Blurt Master Constable*  
*Thomas Lord Cromwell*

HAMLET (Q 1)

*Malcontent*  
*I Honest Whore*  
 HAMLET (Q 2)

*Sejanus*  
*Fair Maid of Bristow*  
*When you see me, you know me*

EVENTS	BOOKS PUBLISHED
1605 ( <i>cont.</i> ) Gunpowder plot	
1606 Gunpowder plotters executed State visit of King of Denmark	<i>Dekker's Seven Deadly Sins of London</i>
1607 Renewed troubles in Ireland Virginia colonised Riots over enclosures A great frost	
1608 Children at Blackfriars disbanded King's Men take over the private playhouse Notorious pirates executed	
*	
1609 Jonson's <i>Masque of Queens</i> at Court Truce in the Netherlands The Oath of Allegiance administered	<i>Dekker's Belman of London</i> (?) Fletcher's <i>Faithful Shepherdess</i> n.d. <i>Dekker's Gull's hornbook</i> Shakespeare's SONNETS

## PLAYS FIRST PRODUCED

*I and II If you know me not*  
*Trick to catch the old one*

*Whore of Babylon*  
*Sophonisba*  
*Woman Hater*  
*Volpone*  
*Isle of Gulls ‡*  
*Rape of Lucrece*  
*Family of Love*  
 MACBETH  
 KING LEAR

*Knight of the Burning Pestle*  
*Travels of three English Brothers*  
*Humour out of breath*  
*Atheist's Tragedy*  
 ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA  
 CORIOLANUS  
 TIMON OF ATHENS

*Faithful Shepherdess*  
*Philaster*  
*Maid's Tragedy*  
*Charles, Duke of Biron‡*  
*Appius and Virginia*  
 PERICLES

*Epicene*  
*Bonduca*  
*Woman is a weathercock*

## PLAYS PUBLISHED

*Dutch Courtesan*  
*I If you know me not*  
*Eastward Hoe*  
*All Fools*  
*London Prodigal*  
*I Jeronimo*

*II If you know me not*  
*II Return from Parnassus*  
*Gentleman Usher*  
*Sir Giles Goosecap*  
*The Fawn*  
*Sophonisba*  
*Wily Beguiled*  
*Monsieur D'Olive*  
*Isle of Gulls*

*Westward Hoe*  
*Whore of Babylon*  
*Fair Maid of the Exchange*  
*Phœnix*  
*Michaelmas Term*  
*Woman Hater*  
*Bussy D'Ambois*  
*Cupid's Whirligig*  
*Travels of three English Brothers*  
*Miseries of enforced marriage*  
*Puritan*  
*Northward Hoe*  
*What You Will*  
*Revenger's Tragedy*  
*Devil's Charter*  
*Volpone*  
*Woman Killed with Kindness*  
*Sir Thomas Wyatt*

*Trick to catch the old one*  
*Family of Love*  
*Merry Devil of Edmonton*  
 KING LEAR  
*Law's Tricks*  
*Humour out of breath*  
*Yorkshire Tragedy*  
*Rape of Lucrece*  
*Tragedy of Biron*  
*A mad world, my masters*  
*Dumb Knight*  
 PERICLES

*The case is altered*  
*Every Woman in her humour*  
*Two maids of Moreclack*

EVENTS	BOOKS PUBLISHED
1610 The plantation of Ulster Henri IV murdered A great drought	
1611 Carr made Viscount Rochester James quarrels with Parliament	A.V. Translation of Bible Chapman's Translation of <i>Iliad</i> completed Donne's <i>Anatomy of the World</i>
1612 Sir Thomas Overbury poisoned in the Tower Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, died Prince Henry died	Skelton's Translation of <i>Don Quixote</i>
1613 Marriage of Princess Elizabeth The Essex divorce suit The Globe Theatre burnt	Drayton's <i>Polyolbion</i> Blowne's <i>Britannia's pastorals</i>
1616 Death of William Shakespeare	
1619 Jaggard's 'False folio' published	
1623 The First Folio published	

## PLAYS FIRST PRODUCED

*The Alchemist*  
*The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*  
*The Roaring Girl*  
*If it be not good, the Devil is in it*  
 CYMBELINE

*King and no King*  
*Catiline*  
*Chaste maid in Cheapside*  
*Amends for Ladies*  
*The Golden Age*  
*The Silver Age*  
 THE WINTER'S TALE  
 TEMPEST

*The Brazen Age*  
*The White Devil*

*The Duchess of Malfi*  
*Honest Man's Fortune*  
*The Iron Age*  
 TWO NOBLE KINSMEN  
 HENRY VIII

## PLAYS PUBLISHED

*Histriomastix*

*Ram Alley*  
*Atheist's Tragedy*  
*The Golden Age*  
*Catiline*  
*May Day*  
*The Roaring Girl*

*The Alchemist*  
*Woman is a weathercock*  
*Christian turned Turk*  
*Widow's Tears*  
*The White Devil*  
*If it be not good*

*The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*  
*The Silver Age*  
*The Brazen Age*  
*Insatiate Countess*  
*Knight of the Burning Pestle*

## APPENDIX III

### A NOTE ON PRICES IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME

BY A. V. JUDGES

It is not uncommon to find in text-books and monographs dealing with particular periods a friendly footnote or so to the effect that currency values at such and such a date can readily be comprehended by multiplying monetary expressions by a suggested figure in order to produce the modern equivalent in purchasing power. Thus to discover the fall in the value of a sterling unit between the reign of Elizabeth and our own day we are told to multiply it by some such figure as 8 or 10. We may well be suspicious of these attempts to cut a quick way through the highly complicated question of comparative price levels, for it is common knowledge that prices in general were rising throughout Shakespeare's lifetime and that they have been fluctuating even more wildly during the last twenty years. But the short-period instability of values is the least serious of our difficulties, for it can be taken into account by the statistician.

There are three main reasons for holding that prices during Shakespeare's lifetime and those of to-day will not yield themselves to satisfactory treatment side by side. The first is that the whole range of transactions in economic life was then distributed as to the relative amounts and the relative values of commodities on a scheme so unlike that with which we are familiar to-day that, lacking a sufficient number of similar items whose prices we may compare, we are without the means of constructing a general price ratio; even approximate results are unattainable. There can be no question of 'weighting' a price index with so many unlikes in the field.

The second reason is that goods passing under the same names

then as now are apt to vary from ours in regard to function, or content, or weight and so on, or durability, sometimes in all four respects. In considering such common objects or services as the sheep, the poor man's loaf, an article of woollen under-clothing, the day's work of a labourer, we are faced with variations of one kind and another wide enough to lead in each case to legitimate differences of opinion as to the proper mode of comparison to be adopted.

The third reason is that the expenditure of individuals in all classes was arranged on a budgetary system not at all in conformity with modern practice. We, for instance, undoubtedly spend a smaller part of our incomes on food and drink and probably less on clothes. We have a far more complex scale of requirements, of alternative uses, of alternative sources of supply. Moreover, except in the case of very bulky commodities like coal, we are far less disturbed by a variation of prices between one locality and another. The prices of many of our purchases are determined and rendered more stable by conditions of cheap international transport. Another factor in the construction of the modern retail price is the large portion taken by the middle-man. In Shakespeare's day, as often as not the retailer was the producer or had played a large part in the production of the wares offered for sale; the price historian is not always in a position to disentangle wholesale from retail prices.

On the whole, values expressed in pounds, shillings and pence have risen in the last three centuries. And we are justified in believing that the money incomes received by people in all walks of life in the time of Elizabeth and James I would be less useful to them if they had to make their purchases at to-day's prices. No doubt, with the whole scale of values re-arranged, they would make their purchases differently; even so they would still be much poorer. Thus we can say that they would be less well housed, less well dressed, less well fed and served, but we cannot say how much less of each, for the advance in prices, as may be demonstrated, has been remarkably uneven. Let us take by way of example some individual commodities that yield themselves more readily than most to comparison.

Taking the retail average in the south-east of England in the last six months of 1933 as 100, the following figures appear to be indicated as an average in the same area during the last thirty years of Shakespeare's life. They are at best only approximate.<sup>1</sup>

Beef	17	Eggs	20
Mutton	20	Candles	125
Butter	50	Heavy woollen cloth	
Cheese (low quality)	37	(medium quality)	117
English wheat (whole-sale)	117	Household coal (London, wholesale)	46
Rabbits	28		

<sup>1</sup> Thanks are due to the promoters of the *English Price History*, shortly to appear, for some data which have been used in preference to the figures given in Thorold Rogers's *History of Agriculture and Prices*.



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